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COMMONWEAL

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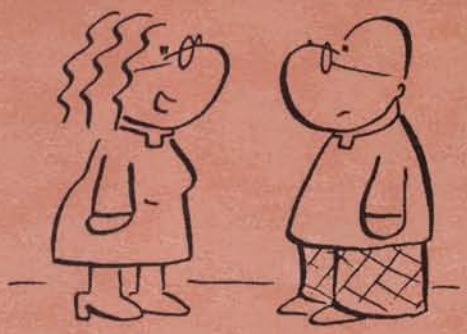
WOMEN'S PASTORAL

LET'S START OVER

Bishop P. Francis Murphy

& THE EDITORS



"My theological position is that men are basically good, but that women are basically better."

EUTHANASIA ON THE CALIFORNIA BALLOT: be sure to read the fine print

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ki Michel

LTH CARE IN OREGON
mas Higgins

ELECTION: appalling, depressing, lting: John Garvey

USTING TO THE NEW WORLD DER: J. Bryan Hehir

garet O'Brien Steinfels raises some tions for Richard McBrien

BOOKS

ABIGAIL McCARTHY
on Mary Cantwell

JOSEPH A. PAGE
on early death in Brazil

CHRISTOPHER LASCH
on J. K. Galbraith

GERALD WEALES
on Grant and Sherman

DENNIS O'BRIEN
on Jaroslav Pelikan

IRVING MALIN
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CORRESPONDENCE

Hear Blackie preach

Tampa, Fla.

To the Editors: No doubt Father Brown and Father Blackie are very different ["Chesterton's Brown and Greeley's Blackie," August 14]. But any reading of Father Blackie that omits reference to his sermons misses the point of the character—and therefore the authentic achievement of Father Greeley's religious art. At the end of each story, in a liturgical setting, Father Blackie translates story into proposition, in universally affecting language at that. Here, in so many words, is Father Greeley's message through his church to the world. The sermons indeed reveal, through the medium of the story, that truly "sacred," deeply "meaningful" message that defines Sipe and Lamb's entirely proper criteria. With Father Blackie, Greeley realizes his "vocation as storyteller" in the "sacred and sacramental" setting. That is why, when Sipe and Lamb take up Father Blackie's sermons, they are likely to join millions of contemporary readers in according genuine appreciation for Father Greeley's spiritual achievement in telling the story of his faith.

JACOB NEUSNER

The writer is distinguished research professor of religious studies at the University of South Florida.

'Sipe & Lamb lie'

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: In their attack on celibacy and my celibacy, A.W.R. Sipe and B.C. Lamb assert that I argue to the worth of my books by the "criteria" of sales and money. They lie. I have never defended those criteria and I do not believe in them. I take seriously as criteria the reactions of readers and of academic scholars, the large majority of both of which react favorably. I note that the latter are not cited by Sipe and Lamb (a comment on their scholarly integrity) and that they are never published by *Commonweal*.

Moreover, Sipe and Lamb cite as proof of my advocacy of these criteria an article I wrote in *Publishers Weekly* on April 10, 1987. It is not a matter of opinion but of fact whether I said in that article that I "was doing something right" with my books because of sales and income. I enclose a copy of that article to prove that I say no such thing. In fact, I do not mention my books at all. I repeat: Sipe and Lamb lie. Their slippery dishonesty in this matter is characteristic of their whole article which is a pastiche of fabrications, distortions, gratuitous assertions, snide innuendos and twistings out of context, an inkblot into which they can project their own emotional needs. For example, in context the metaphor of God as a storyteller emphasizes not the power of God but her impotency in the face of human freedom.

My question to you pertains not to the integrity and honesty of Sipe and Lamb but to the integrity and honesty of *Commonweal*. Why did you not check the reference to the *Publishers Weekly* article to see if it supported their charge against me? One cannot ask of *Commonweal* the obsessive checking for facts that one expects from the *New Yorker*. However, when someone is accused of a patently stupid position, surely your editors should check the reference to see whether he really holds that position.

I do not expect an apology. I do not even expect that you will tell your readers that there is no justification for Sipe and Lamb's accusation in the 1987 article. But I do hope that you will print this letter the way I wrote it.

ANDREW GREELEY

The authors reply:

The sentence in our article that Father Greeley calls a lie reads as follows:

"Greeley argues in his autobiography and elsewhere (*Publishers Weekly*, April 10, 1987) that he must be doing something right to be selling so many books and making so much money." He now writes: "I have never defended these criteria and I do not believe in them."

Let's go to the tape. In his autobiography, *Confessions of a Parish Priest* (Simon & Schuster Pocketbooks, 1986), Father Greeley responds to critics who question the value of his work by making explicit reference to the approval "of millions of lay people" (p. 213), to his own "best seller" status (p. 486), and to the "size of the marketplace in which [his] novels are gobbled up" (p. 203).

The same criteria appear again in the *Publishers Weekly* article we cited. From its title—"Who Reads Book Reviews Anyway?"—to its last sentence, it is an attempt to show that book sales are a more important gauge of a book's importance than are the judgments of its journalistic reviewers. "There is almost no correlation," Greeley writes in *PW*, "between the reviews a book receives and its market success." Why? In Greeley's view, because "book reviews are usually written with the contemptuous assumption that if a lot of people like a book it must be worthless."

Moreover, Greeley writes, many book reviews are "mean-spirited"; Sunday book sections are "self-important, pompous, and supercilious"; reviewers write "for themselves and friends, to impress others with their superior taste, to pos-

(Continued on page 30)

Commonweal is indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, Index of American Periodical Verse, Book Review Digest and Book Review Index. Microfilm from Vol. 1, 1924, to current issues available through University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and on Microfiche from Bell & Howell, Wooster, Ohio 44691. Serials Data program No.: ISSN 0010-3330. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional offices. Copyright © 1992 Commonweal Foundation. Single Copy, $2. Yearly subscriptions, U.S., $36; Canada, $39; foreign, $41. Special two-year rate: U.S. $62; Canada, $66; foreign, $72. All Canadian and foreign subscriptions must be paid in U.S. dollars by International Money Order or by check on a U.S. bank.

Illustrations: Cover design, Emil Antonucci; cover cartoon, Shiong, Rothco; p. 5, Baloo, Rothco; pp. 6, 22, 28, Paul Valerry; pp. 11, 30, Ross, Rothco; p. 23, Jean Charlot; p. 26, courtesy of The Bettmann Archives.

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Commonweal, [ISSN 0010-3330] A Review of Public Affairs, Religion, Literature, and the Arts, is published biweekly except Christmas/New Year's; and monthly July and August, by Commonweal Foundation, 15 Dutch St., New York, N.Y. 10038. Telephone: (212) 732-0800. Display advertising correspondence should be sent to Ruth E. Taylor, 11 Graffam Rd., So. Portland, Me. 04106 (207) 799-4387. classified advertising correspondence to 15 Dutch St. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Commonweal, 15 Dutch St. New York, N.Y. 10038.

Dead letter

Draft IV of the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter on women's concerns, recently released, has become a pastoral letter on the concerns of the bishops over what the Vatican will tolerate their saying on the question of women. It is hard to know what examples from Draft IV would fully convey the muddle that has come of the bishops' decade-long letter-writing process. Perhaps attention to what has been *removed* offers the best clue. Draft I, as readers may recall, had selected quotes from women who had testified before the bishops' committee. Some of those testimonies were quite remarkable:

> As I reflect upon my experience as a Catholic woman what stands out the most for me is that I choose to participate in an institution that is discriminating against me as a woman. As a black woman, I would never even consider participating in any group that was blatantly racist—yet, I maintain membership in a church that is blatantly sexist. That's a mystery to me in and of itself! And, it strengthens my commitment to do anything I can to help my beloved church move toward a position of justice in regard to the status of women [a woman from the Diocese of Savannah].

That woman's voice, so forceful and so faithful, is gone in Draft IV—along with all the other voices. In Draft I sexism was described as a moral and social evil whose pervasiveness, it was acknowledged, reached even into the church:

> Some men, clerics included, assume they have the right to dominate women. In direct conflict with the essential elements of our heritage, sexism breeds an oppressive mentality that divides and destroys. Such attitudes when found in the church only serve to reenforce society's depersonalization of women. For example, some women reported that priest counselors told them to "offer up to God" the abuse of their husbands.

In Draft IV, sexism appears as a remote and distant problem: "women name the evil of sexism"; and its definition ("unjust discrimination based on sex") is drawn from Webster's dictionary. The bishops no longer seem to know as much about sexism as they did in Draft I. Nor is it any longer to be found, at least in the text, among the clergy. It just seems to be something women want to "name."

Draft I virtually endorsed opening the diaconate to women and pointed to the serious doubts many scholars had about the arguments raised against ordination of women to the priesthood. Draft IV returns to those very arguments, which were made in *Inter insigniores* (the Vatican Declaration on the Admission of the Women to the Ministerial Priesthood), and repeats them as if the doubts had vanished.

Elsewhere in this issue (see page 11), Bishop P. Francis Murphy provides other comparisons and contrasts between and among all four drafts of this pastoral letter. Bishop Murphy utters his own cry of dismay at what has come of the bishops' ef-

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forts to respond to the concerns of women, and there seems little point in our upping the volume on his.

The whole process is a sad and sorry commentary on the state of Vatican attitudes about women and on the divisions among the bishops themselves—divisions as much about what constitutes loyalty to Rome as about women, sexism, and discrimination. From the beginning women never expected much from this pastoral process. And in this they will not be disappointed.

True, there are parts of the fourth, as of all the drafts, that are unexceptionable—at least when it comes to enumerating the social and civil forms of discrimination against women and acknowledging the contempt and violence visited upon women by men who refuse to see women as their equals. (There is in the fourth draft—as in Vatican documents on homosexuality—a motif of blaming the victim that is unconscionable.) No, when it comes to our society's problems with sexism the bishops can see them as clearly as any group of men. Draft I showed that they could even see the beam in their own eye.

What has happened in Draft IV is clear enough; it reverses the direction of concerns. Thus, Vatican opposition to the ordination of women, rather than the concerns of women expressed in hearings and testimony, has become the governing principle and major premise of the pastoral letter. The less-than-convincing arguments and assumptions used to bolster opposition to women's ordination have been read back into the pastoral process and it is that argument which now shapes the whole perspective through which the bishops analyze the civic and social questions.

The underlying formula "different, yet equal," used to define the differentiating masculine and feminine character of human nature, and "complementarity," said to characterize the relationship between men and women, may go a long way with those opposed to the ordination of women. But it sounds a familiar and discredited theme in American ears. As the bishops themselves must see, such formulas and definitions finally can offer no credible opposition to the discriminatory practices and attitudes the bishops plainly see in our society, but from which they have been forced to avert their eyes when it appears in our church. And at least in this regard those who care about women's concerns should be disappointed. As Bishop Murphy says, "the last state is worse than the first."

Lest the messengers be killed, kill the message. Stop the pastoral. That is the only decent thing to do or, rather, the only decent course that is politically (ecclesiastically) possible. We urge the bishops to vote down the letter when they meet in November and to consider other proposals, some offered in these pages by Bishop Murphy.

And there are others. In particular, if the opposition to women's ordination is not to be counted simply as discrimination, then the bishops need to go to work in their own diocesan offices, pastoral councils, and canonical processes to separate the connection between ordination and church governance. Women—as well as unordained men—should be given voice and authority in helping to run the Catholic church. Nothing less will do.

AN EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

SHIFTING THE CENTER

A CATHOLIC SHELL GAME

A few weeks ago, in *America* magazine (August 22), the Reverend Richard McBrien, distinguished theologian and outspoken columnist, sounded an alarm. An effort is underway, he complains, to redefine the "center" in the Catholic church.

In his view, the center belongs to adherents of the majority views at Vatican II, a "broad and diverse" group including "most of those Catholics who do the day-to-day work of the church—liturgically, educationally, pastorally." Some of them may press harder for change; he calls them "the center-left." Some of them, for example, bishops like Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, he describes as more cautious—"the center-right." But, in fact, all are agreed on "the ecclesiological shift the council ratified" and "differ only on the pace of change and the details of implementation."

The present papacy, however, has tried to foster a different constellation of forces. For them the center consists of people like Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Opus Dei, the theological journal *Communio,* and the many bishops John Paul II has appointed. The right consists of the followers and sympathizers of the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, whether they are in or out of the church. By deduction, therefore, the left, which would presumably be equally "out of the doctrinal mainstream," must include Archbishop Rembert Weakland, the Catholic Theological Society, and *Commonweal* among others. Of course, anyone still further to the left would fall off the map.

This attempt to redefine the center is "unfair and inaccurate," McBrien says. It is a maneuver to recast the heirs of the council's majority as marginal while usurping their rightful place for those who are the heirs of the council's defeated minority.

Not to be coy about it: it turns out that I am myself guilty of "unwitting complicity" in this process, having criticized both left and right in the church in a manner that does not meet McBrien's specifications. Without claiming to be objective in my own case, I believe that McBrien has misperceived what I was saying, but that is a matter to be taken up in a letter to the editor of *America*.

For the moment my concern is the redefining of the center. First, I believe that McBrien makes a valid point. Second, I believe that point is narrower and far more limited than he acknowledges.

That those who sympathize with the Wojtyla-Ratzinger vision of restoring a discipline and militancy characteristic of pre-Vatican II Catholicism present themselves as occupying the true center in the church is clear—and hardly surprising. As McBrien himself says, quoting the Scholastic maxim, "*in medio stat virtus*" ("virtue stands in the middle"); hence, there is a rhetori-

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cal advantage to claiming the center.

In fact, such positioning—which can be highly calculated or entirely sincere—is a staple of ideological jousting. Aren't the various American Catholic reform lobbies (Catholics Speak Out, the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church, the Women's Ordination Conference, Call to Action, CORPUS, Dignity/USA, etc.) doing the same when they commission—and interpret—a Gallup Poll to demonstrate that they, and not the bishops, are in "the mainstream"? (*See* Dennis Doyle's excellent and apposite letter on that subject, *Commonweal*, August 14, 1992.) And to be fair, aren't they doing that to rebut prior conservative claims that "real Catholics" are some updated version of the simple peasant, still yearning for novenas, the Legion of Decency, and nuns in habits?

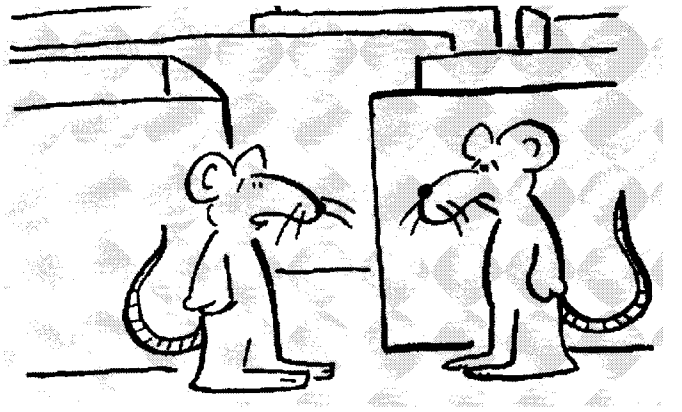
But laying claim to the center is not the only move contending parties make. Some go in the opposite direction, promoting themselves as "the cutting edge," the avant-garde, the experimenters and innovators. Some people—including conservatives who shrewdly appropriate terms like "countercultural" or "postmodern" for their own purposes—would like to appear "mainstream" and "prophetic" at the same time. This posturing can seem childish, although in American politics it has become the cynical work of master manipulators. But whether in the church or in presidential campaigns, the stakes can be high. McBrien is right about that.

He is not right, however, when he seems to reduce the conflicts in today's church to this political jostling. His notion of the center is essentially spatial or statistical: "The center is the largest segment of the Catholic church, as any teacher who has marked on a curve would expect." Absent from his essay is any acknowledgment that serious intellectual differences might be involved in today's conflicts, except for an undifferentiated attitude for or against the council.

At one point McBrien says that, in place of my "ambiguous left-right categories" for describing contending perspectives in the church, he prefers the four-category grid that Avery Dulles, S.J., has proposed (traditionalists, neoconservatives, liberals, and radicals). Fair enough. But each of these camps, according to Dulles, is governed by a distinct vision and agenda. By contrast, McBrien immediately relabels the four categories ("I prefer the more neutral 'right, center-right, center-left, left'"), reducing them to points along a spectrum and eviscerating them of Dulles's, or any other, specific content, except perhaps an overall attitude toward the council.

It is a telling move. For it implies that conflict in the church is not about important questions of substance that remain genuinely open or troubling. Those were all settled at Vatican II. Today, apart from differences over the pace and details of change, it is all politics.

But if McBrien's essay on conflict in the church brackets issues of substance, it also ignores issues of style. In fact, these were the burden of my two speeches (*see America,* May 2, 1992, and *Origins,* July 18, 1991) that McBrien finds distressing. They were pleas that contending groups and individuals in the church exercise the capacity to be self-critical, strive to discern the valid fears of adversaries, avoid the self-exculpatory pathos of imagining oneself the martyred underdog confronting an all-powerful oppressor, reject the smug assumption that one's own views are necessarily the wave of the future, refrain from excommunicating critics or stigmatizing ideas, pay attention to whole generations of new questions and new Catholics arrived on the scene since Vatican II. In this regard, both left and right in the church, and center-left (where McBrien and I both place ourselves) and center-right too, have developed bad habits.



"Don't ask me — I'm lost too."

I appreciate McBrien's realistic reminder of the rhetorical maneuvering that is very much at work in today's church—and probably inevitable in any day's church. But if the price of avoiding "unwitting complicity" in such maneuvering is to remain silent or selective about destructive matters of style, it is too high a price to pay. MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS

HEALTH-CARE REFORM

RATIONING IN OREGON
NOT THIS WAY

On August 3, when the Bush administration rejected Oregon's request for a waiver to change the state's medicaid program in order to implement a system of explicit rationing, a number of commentators protested the decision. Along with state officials, they claimed the decision was the result of "election year politics." The *New York Times* later editorialized that, "absent any showing of invidious discrimination," the denial should be overturned and Oregon's appeal granted.

Upon closer examination, however, it appears that the White House was absolutely correct in rejecting Oregon's proposal. The administration should not have taken as long as it did to make its decision. Even prior to the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, there was more than sufficient evidence of fatal flaws in the proposal. Oregon wanted to rank order procedures for which it would pay, while at the same time extending coverage to more of the indigent population. This laudable goal

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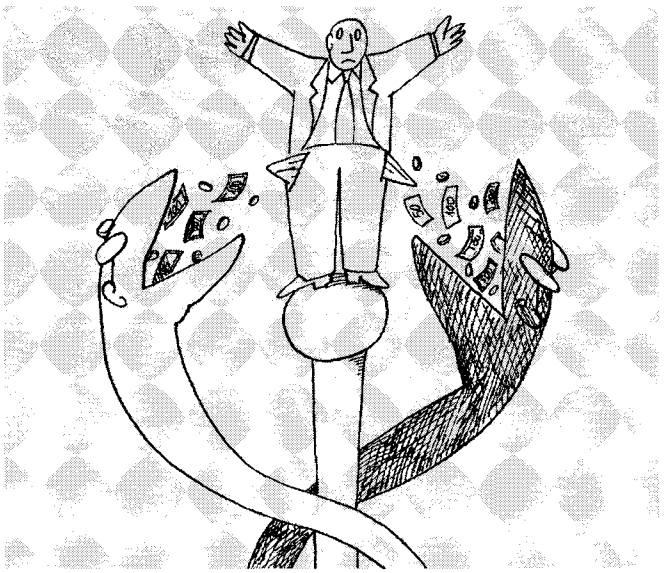

would be achieved by "thinning the soup," e.g., only paying for those procedures that ranked high enough to be above the cutoff line.

Contrary to what the proponents suggest, this debate is not about rationing, per se. Obviously, in any situation where there is inelastic demand and finite resources, such as health care, there has to be rationing. As the proponents observe, we already ration health care in this country very badly, on the basis of access to insurance. But the Oregon plan would only have substituted an equally objectionable system without remedying the most glaring defects in our current one. There were two overriding objections to the Oregon plan:

1. It was rationing by recipe. Regardless of almost any other variable concerning one's health status, reimbursement was based on whether or not a given procedure was on or off an approved list. Human beings are not, of course, so readily classified. That's why triage decisions take into account holistic judgments about individuals. By following blindly the Oregon norms, any number of absurd outcomes were bound to result.

That is exactly what happened when Oregon tried to implement its program three years ago. A twelve-year-old boy with leukemia was denied a potentially life-saving bone marrow transplant because tissue transplants were not on the approved list. At the same time, patients near the end of their lives were receiving nonessential care because those procedures were on the list.

2. The *New York Times*'s editorial to the contrary, the proposal was, in fact, invidious discrimination on the basis of race, sex, class, age, and disability. The proposal applied only to Medicaid AFDC recipients. These recipients are disproportionately young, black, and female. They are all poor. And the process by which the list of covered benefits was determined was a violation of any clear reading of the Disabilities Act. One should note that this rationing scheme was not intended to cover any other publicly funded beneficiaries such as public employees, retirees, etc. The determining factor was political clout. The poor don't vote, and they don't have political action committees. Public employees and senior citizens do.

For these and other reasons a number of health policy experts like Henry Aaron from the Brookings Institution, advocacy groups like The Children's Defense Fund, and progressive legislators like Congressman Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) and Senator Albert Gore (D-Tenn.)—most of whom do not usually agree with the Bush administration—found the Oregon proposal untenable.

There remains strong support, however, for states to take the initiative in devising more equitable approaches to improving access and controlling costs in our health-care system. Inspired by Hawaii's successful record providing near universal access to health care, states as diverse as Minnesota, Washington, Colorado, Iowa, Maryland, Oklahoma, and others are preparing waiver requests to the federal government for a variety of innovative and responsible approaches. Some involve mandated insurance. Others create voluntary purchasing approaches. They all deserve consideration because states should serve as "laboratories of democracy." They may even be expected to include some form of rationing, either direct or indirect. Oregon should be encouraged to come back with its own proposal, one which meets the test of good medical practice and fundamental fairness. THOMAS HIGGINS

Thomas Higgins, an insurance executive, is the former director of the Department of Human Services of Multnomah County, Oregon. He was also Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet of President Jimmy Carter.

REPORT FROM SAINT BART'S

KUGICHAGULIA & KUUMBA

ALSO UMOJA, UJIMA, IMANI, NIA, UJAMAA

I am a Hispanic from Colorado. In 1991 I graduated from Stanford with a degree in political science. Now I live and work in a third-world city, far away from the American life I left behind to become a volunteer teacher. The city's alleys are strewn with potholes and broken glass, and most of its people live in poverty. Parts of the city look like a ravaged war zone; mountains of rubble lie adjacent to abandoned homes and factories. Drugs and prostitution are rampant.

The air here in the southern part of the city reeks of burning trash and sewage. On hot, humid days, the stench becomes nauseating. Yet, this is a "young" city: It is teeming with the energy and potential of its residents, better than half of whom are less than twenty-five years old. The neighborhood priest calls this the city of "broken wings." He is referring to its greatest tragedy: the children trapped here are the undeserving heirs of a sinkhole of filth and ugliness. This city is Camden, New Jersey.

Anyone who has read Jonathan Kozol's excellent book *Savage Inequalities* (Crown Publishers) or flipped through this

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year's January 20 *Time* magazine is already familiar with the grisly side of Camden. Kozol and *Time* told the ugly truth, but they only gave part of the story. They failed to look beyond the surface and discover that there is also a torch of hope that burns in Camden.

I admit that life as a Jesuit Volunteer is far from glorious. Some dark, rainy February mornings I arrive at school at 7:20 A.M. and wish I were anywhere else but facing another day with my third-graders. As I dump my backpack loaded with graded workbooks on my desk, I look around the empty room and see the construction-paper snowflakes hanging from the ceiling, the slightly crooked rows of desks, the black Jesus, the African-American flag in the corner, and I try to remind myself why I am here.

Certainly there are times as a teacher when I become exasperated, especially at the fights over pencils and stickers and who insulted whose mother. I become weary when I walk home to the dilapidated volunteer house, greeted on the way by the stench of the South Camden sewer and the homeless people who sit all day on our stoop to drink. I become frustrated when I visit wealthy suburban Catholic schools and stare in awe at their computers, music rooms, and playgrounds. I even want to scream sometimes when I return to my classroom and realize that I feel grateful and lucky because some friends have donated an old hand-cranked pencil sharpener and two playground balls. Sometimes I feel the exasperation that Kozol must have felt after visiting Camden's public schools.

But Kozol and *Time* missed something. Neither made it to Saint Bartholomew's, the school where I teach. Neither took the extra step to discover what I call the "fruits of exasperation." They didn't experience, for example, the Christmas rap my class performed, complete with a hot-pink pregnant Mary, four jammin' angels with white turtlenecks and M.C. Hammer shades, and some real cool shepherds and wisewomen. They weren't present when the New Jersey Young Audience's black dance troupe came and gave our children a chance to get on stage and experience modern dance. They didn't witness the overwhelming generosity of Saint Bartholomew's children during the Thanksgiving food drive, or participate in the black history, art, and poetry contests, or attend the culminating showcase of class performances at the black history assembly. They never overheard the prayers whispered solemnly for the classmate whose grandmother-guardian had just died. They never observed these Baptist and Muslim children burst into a spontaneous round of "She's a Grand Old Flag" on the snowy streets of downtown Philadelphia during a field trip. They didn't witness a spelling bee conducted in sign language. They missed seeing our children pick up trash on the playground or share their meager lunches with those who don't have any. And if they were ever bear-hugged for no reason by even one of these beautiful children, they didn't write about it.

The children of Camden laugh and dance. Daily. And although the Saint Bart's third-graders know far more than I ever did at their age about drugs and violence, in their journals they record their visions of the future with the unabashed confidence of an eight-year-old American child. These third-graders dream of no less than going to college and becoming doctors and lawyers and scientists and artists and corporate executives. I am touched by their undaunted aspirations. Unfortunately, I see in the eyes of some of the older students that doors have already closed and locked. It terrifies me to think this degenerative process seems inevitable.

We teachers can't hand these children their dreams. We have no delusions of heroically rescuing them from their fate. We may or may not change their future, but as teachers we can inject poetry and music and art and science into the bloodstream of the classroom, and thereby bring the children a tiny step closer to those dreams.

Catholic education emphasizes the constancy of God's love. Black education stresses the seven principles: *Kugichagulia*, self-determination; *umoja*, unity; *ujima*, working together; *imani*, faith; *nia*, purpose; *ujamaa*, support/respect; and *kuumba*, creativity. My favorite is *kuumba*, which refers to human creativity. *Kuumba*, manifested and practiced, means to leave the world a better, more beautiful place. The children of Saint Bartholomew's are brimming with God's love and *kuumba*. Perhaps the world can learn something from them.

MONICA M. MÁRQUEZ

Monica M. Márquez is a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps.

COMMONWEAL BUSINESS MANAGER

In the next six months, we will be adding a business manager to our staff. We are looking for someone to pursue the business interests of the magazine with vigor and intelligence, someone with promotion and business skills committed to working with a small staff and a limited budget to ensure the financial future of *Commonweal*. Previous experience with a magazine, small business, or nonprofit organization is a plus.

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J. Bryan Hehir

WORLD OF FAULTLINES

SOVEREIGNTY, SELF-DETERMINATION, INTERVENTION

Three riveting and profoundly different situations in the world today testify to the degree of change required in the way we think about world politics in the 1990s. Bosnia, Somalia, and Iraq could hardly be more different on the surface, yet any response to them tends to drive analysis and planning back to a similar theme, the changing character of international relations. The changes are not captured in the phrase "post-cold war," and they were never spelled out in the Gulf War claims about a "new world order." So now it is necessary not only to confront the specific tragedies of Bosnia, Somalia, and Iraq, but to ask what they say collectively about the world which confronts us in the last decade of the twentieth century.

First, the differences: each of the three cases highlights a distinct kind of problem that advocates of international order must address; no single definition is possible for them. Bosnia most clearly reflects the ending of the cold war. For forty years the iron rule of Tito and the implicit consensus of the superpowers prevented the eruption of the national, religious, and ethnic passions that now consume the hauntingly historic city of Sarajevo. The complex legacy of the right of self-determination has stalked the history of Yugoslavia for most of this century; now a new chapter of the story is being written in blood. One need not be nostalgic about the cold war to admit that it suppressed the lethal forces now at work in the Balkans. Bosnia forces the rest of Europe and the world to face the question of what the proper political and moral response is to multiple claims of self-determination in the same territory; more urgently it reminds us that atrocities are not out of fashion even if the cold war is.

But Bosnia is a powderkeg; to anyone contemplating intervention, it presents the sobering prospect of an endless war, with mounting casualties and no diplomatic exit. Somalia is not a powderkeg; it is not politically dangerous, but it is humanly atrocious. Somalia is about starvation not self-determination. True, starvation is entwined with tribal warfare, but the military dimensions of Somalia are not threatening. Somalia testifies less to the complexity of policy choices then to the consequences of neglect when a nation and its people do not count on the scales of high politics and new order designs. Somalia is a costly human reminder about other places in Africa and the world whose names and issues have hardly entered the discussion of post-cold war futures.

In the face of Bosnia and Somalia, Iraq reflects more "normal" issues of foreign policy: a revisionist state with a repressive regime, arguments about balances of power, proliferation, and trade embargoes. It is undoubtedly the case that the Iraqi move against Kuwait also reflected the end of the cold war; prior to 1989 the Soviets would have restrained such a reckless act and the United States could never have shaped an international response under UN auspices if the invasion had occurred. In today's post-cold war and post-Gulf War setting, Iraq's internal policies and external designs pose difficult but familiar choices for policymakers. The response to them, however, has pushed beyond conventional measures which, like the Bosnia and Somalia cases, suggests the need to address basic concepts of international life today.

The first is the likelihood of persistent conflict and frequent collision between claims of self-determination and calls for respecting sovereignty. As Stanley Hoffmann recently observed in the *New York Review of Books* (April 9, 1992), these are equally foundational principles of international order. In some form or other the international community has been balancing these two principles since the time of the League of Nations, but the discipline of cold-war tension often muted calls for self-determination. The future promises no such constraint. In theory, it is possible to conceive of political arrangements that would satisfy most of the aspirations of self-determination, but the political passions of nationalism and ethnic identity do not yield easily to negotiated compromises.

At one level the tension between self-determination and sovereignty can be regarded as an internal matter for states, but the distinction between internal and external issues is not hard and fast. When the struggle for self-determination produces widespread repression, civil war, or threats of genocide, as it has in both Bosnia and Iraq, the international community cannot be a detached observer. When the drive for self-determination succeeds politically, but produces a state which is not economically viable, the international community or some part of it (like the European Community) is asked to bridge the gap between political success and economic collapse. When the demands for self-determination multiply, international institutions and other states have to judge not only the merits of each request for recognition, but also the cumulative impact on international order.

The status of sovereignty is a second faultline on the map of international politics in the 1990s. Sovereignty is challenged from below by calls for self-determination, but it also is being reshaped by broad transnational forces. Three different dimensions of international politics place new constraints on sovereign states. The UN human rights regime holds the international community responsible for systematic violations of rights within the boundaries of a sovereign state. The pervasive economic interdependence of the world

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means that participation in the global economy carries with it constraints as well as opportunities; integration into the system also means penetration of one's economy by others. Finally, if the Maastricht Treaty is approved by the members of the European Community, it will set a precedent for states to cede or "to pool" sovereignty voluntarily in pursuit of maximizing their foreign policy goals. The cumulative effect of these three developments—one normative, one economic, and one political—point toward a revised understanding of sovereignty.

Finally, when the notion of sovereignty is being altered, it is not surprising that the correlative concept of intervention is also being recast. The first prerogative of sovereignty has been protection against intervention. In the face of the three cases cited here, however, the dynamic in the international community has been to press for various forms of intervention: political, humanitarian, and military.

The Iraqi case has produced the most decisive results: under UN authorization the Gulf War coalition has effectively removed two sectors of Iraq from the control of the central government. These measures, although justified because of threats posed to Kurds and Shiites, are profound invasions of the traditional notion of sovereignty. In Bosnia, the failure to moderate the conflict through diplomatic and economic measures has led to calls for international military action. The hesitancy to move militarily has not been because of doubts about the legitimacy of such action, but because of fear that it will not succeed. In normative terms, the debate has not been about just-cause but about proportionality and possibility of success. Finally, the humanitarian intervention in Somalia—very late and still too limited in scope—also raises the possibility that more intrusive action will be needed to protect food supplies.

All three of these cases are desperate situations requiring concrete responses. Just below the surface of each situation lies a second need for a long-term systematic effort to recast both the content of sovereignty and the norm of nonintervention to provide a more adequate framework for international order in this decade and the next century. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

APPALLING, DEPRESSING, REVOLTING

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Both of the conventions are over now. The only consolation is that we will not have to put up with that sort of thing for another four years. Once again, the search for a lesser evil seems pointless; the banality and emptiness of both performances may point different ways, but they are equally appalling directions. It isn't true to say that there is no significant difference between the parties, as some have, though there is less than partisans will allow. The differences that do exist will force a lot of us to waive the franchise, at the level of the presidency anyway. Not to vote is, in fact, a statement.

It isn't true, as some friends have suggested, that this is equivalent to voting for the status quo and for George Bush and his policies. If that were true, Bush partisans could not accuse me (as they do) of doing something that is equivalent to voting for Bill Clinton and the policies of the Democrats. I'm sorry Ross Perot dropped out. I wouldn't have voted for him either, but I would like to see his supporters try to explain how my not voting for him is the equivalent of voting for both Bush *and* Clinton.

Leave aside for the moment the fact that Clinton's stated agenda doesn't look significantly different from that of Michael Dukakis in 1988, except for trying to appear even more conservative, or the fact that like Dukakis and Democrats generally he is in hock to the least creative sectors of the union movement, the teachers and government employee unions, and will do nothing to shake them up or make them think (assuming thinking is something they can do); leave aside the fact that enthusiasm for Clinton seems to have more to do with the fact that he is not Bush than with any positive virtue (though not being Bush does have its positive aspects), and that he has abandoned any reasonable approach to limiting entitlements, like means-testing for Social Security—leaving these things aside, the Democrats offer so little, and offend so deeply, that I can't vote for them.

When Bill Clinton presided over the execution of a man who was arguably retarded—he could have commuted the sentence to life in prison, as governor of Arkansas—I decided then that I couldn't vote for him. This was before his fervent support of NARAL (National Abortion Rights Action League) and before abortion rights became the touchstone, the litmus test, the way of proving your true Democratic credentials. These things, capital punishment and abortion, are single issues. So are civil rights and racism; so was the war in Southeast Asia. The single issues people warn us away from, when we vote, are usually the issues they don't care much about themselves. When the Democrats would not allow prolife Governor Robert Casey of Pennsylvania to speak, but pushed a prochoice agenda and allowed a defense of gay rights, they played into the hands of the worst Republican tacticians.

And what scabby hands those are! Because the economy lies in ruins after years of a Republican borrow-and-spend program, their focus could not be on the economy (except for one brief and obviously silly assertion that we are better off now than we were four years ago), and so the Republicans decided to stress values, which are, with the death of the cold war, the last refuge of scoundrels. It was a little like a Calvin and Hobbes cartoon, with the little kid who's made a shambles of things trying to distract his mother's at-

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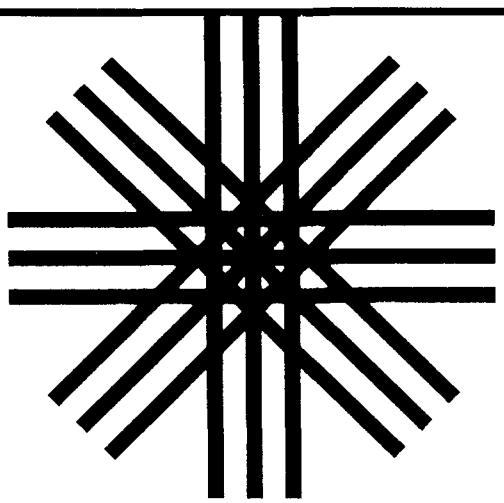
tention from the smoking rubble pile: Look at what those horrible people are doing over there, he says, pointing frantically, isn't it terrible...as if politicians and political platforms could ever deal in any serious way with cultural values. It would be hard to think of a more ineffective focus for a partisan political platform than ultimate values (short of a platform which demanded a change in the annual mean temperature of the plains states) but it is all the Republicans have left, having been in charge and having made a thorough botch of things, making us the world's greatest debtor nation, with the highest unemployment rate in a decade. When Bush announced tax cuts at the Republican convention, the dollar fell to its lowest point against the German mark, a result of the correct perception on the part of currency speculators that the U.S. government wasn't serious about the deficit. Things are worse for the poor than they have been in years, and life is getting tougher for almost all of the rest of us.

What is most annoying is the way in which both sides have made any discussion about values so crudely predetermined that honest thought about the public implications of such difficult issues as abortion and discrimination against homosexuals has been made even more difficult than it would normally be in a pluralistic society. The Republicans came up with a "God and..." formulation: God and country, God and this or that value, with God as a vital ingredient. This is a combination of cynicism and idolatry that makes you know, anyway, that the fundamentalist God doesn't exist or Houston would have been reduced to ashes. A respect for life as something God-given, something inherently holy, doesn't include the lives of those Iraqis who appear only as distant computer-blips on the dulled consciences of the people who still celebrate Desert Storm. And the reporters who look at all of this continue to deal with it as if it were a horse race: who is doing better? They should be asking, whose cowardice is more apparent now, whose venality and pandering more obvious? In fact, the Democrats will have to raise taxes or cut into entitlements if they are to deal with the deficit, but Clinton doesn't have the courage to say this. To ask whether Bush has the courage to say anything is laughable. The campaign becomes a form of ritual behavior, in which we are asked to pretend that something significant might happen if one or the other candidate is elected.

There is always the issue of Supreme Court appointments. If Clinton were elected he would appoint someone prochoice to the Court—he has made his litmus test clear, his single issue. Bush would probably veto any attempt by Congress to enshrine *Roe* v. *Wade*. The Court and its actions, past and future, may be the single reason to cast a vote in this election. But what if Bush were suddenly to discover, during a second term, that he didn't need to care anymore about what people thought? This is a terrifying thought: like a slug developing vertebrae, or a squid learning to fly, there is something unnatural and unnerving about the thought of George Bush as a man of conviction. He's been pro-abortion before, and who knows what he might do once he really doesn't need the Republican Right to get elected? He won't need them in Congress, since they won't be there.

Don't vote at this level. As the old saw has it, it only encourages them. Vote, by all means, for anyone who deserves it at the congressional and local levels. Write in someone at the top, or vote for a friend. They can't call it apathy if there is a reasonable turnout, and a clear turnoff at the top of the ticket. The conventions make it clear, however, that there is a party-wide acquiescence in the whole disgusting process; so if you want to stay home, it's certainly all right with me. □



THE GRAYMOOR PRIZE

The Friars of the Atonement announce the third annual Graymoor Prize, to be awarded to the best essay on any aspect of ecumenical or interreligious affairs. Original and unpublished essays of approximately 2,500-4,000 words should be submitted to the editors of COMMONWEAL. The winning essay will receive a prize of $1,000 and will be published in COMMONWEAL.

Deadline: October 1, 1992. Announcement of Prize: December 18, 1992. The prize-winning essay will be published in COMMONWEAL's January 15, 1993 issue. This essay will become the property of the Graymoor Ecumenical Institute. All other essays will be returned to their authors after January 1.

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LET'S START OVER

A BISHOP APPRAISES THE PASTORAL ON WOMEN

P. FRANCIS MURPHY

In this essay I want to look at the failure of the American bishops to address and respond to women's concerns honestly in the various drafts of our pastoral letter, "One in Christ Jesus." The fourth draft of the letter, which was sent to all of the bishops at the end of August, further distances us from the women who have spoken to us during the past decade. It is a giant step backward from some of the promising insights and new directions found in the three earlier drafts. Draft IV introduces a new tone—one of caution, fear, and even blame for the victims of sexism.

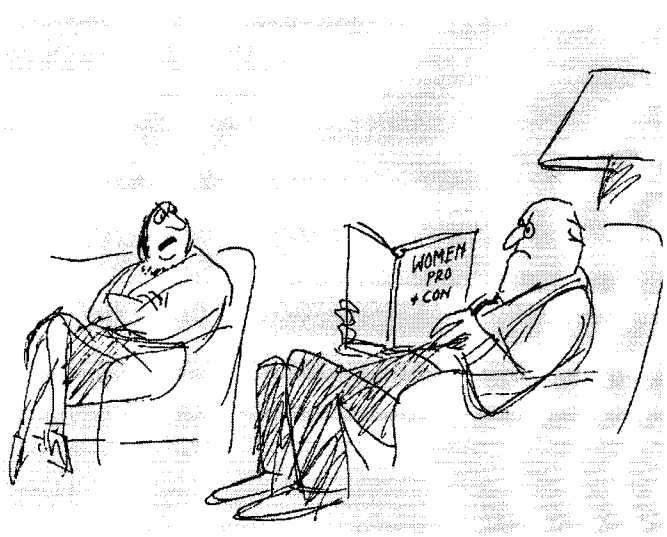
As discouraging as this draft may be, I also want to point to signs of hope and new opportunity for women in other events and experiences that have occurred since November 1983, when the decision to write a pastoral letter was first made. Appraising the nine-year history of this effort is a little like walking through a minefield. Still, I believe it is helpful to review what the pastoral letter has achieved, what it has failed to achieve, and the challenges it presents for the future.

It is important to view the pastoral as a continuum rather than as a definitive document. We should remember that, at least initially, the bishops listened to women—some 75,000 of them in 140 diocesan consultations. As a result of listening, the three drafts urged the inclusion of women in liturgical ministries; proposed a serious study of the diaconate; presented new insights for men to consider; gave information concerning women and poverty; examined and condemned the sin of sexism and its oppressive effects; promoted fair remuneration for women working for the church; denounced violence against women; and outlined some problematic issues relating to single, divorced, and lesbian women in the church community. They made a number of proposals, such as formation of women's commissions, promotion of sex education programs, etc. While these proposals were not transformative, they were genuine responses to a variety of problems.

The real strength of the process is that the bishops' committee listened to a diversity of women who are members of the church's body. It consulted the experience of many whose talents and aspirations are unjustly overlooked, especially in the church. It brought this listening process into the public domain and opened a dialogue that cannot be dismissed or ignored. This raised awareness of women's concerns with the church, not only in the United States, but in a number of countries around the world. In the process, some fundamental issues that go beyond women's concerns have been raised, issues such as ecclesiology, the role of Rome, the nature of our being church together.

The Committee

Bishop Joseph Imesch's committee has rendered an important service. The committee made it clear how genuinely important the issues—lumped under the rubric of women's concerns—are, from our perspective as men with special "oversight" responsibilities in the church. It showed us how diverse the responses are in different places in the United States. It also reminded us that the current National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) could not respond to certain issues,



"Well, what's the verdict?"

BISHOP P. FRANCIS MURPHY *is an auxiliary bishop in Baltimore and, from 1978-89, was a member of the NCCB Committee on Women. Some of the material in this essay is based on an address given at the College of Notre Dame, Baltimore, May 9, 1992.*

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notably, birth control and women's ordination, in a manner that a substantial number of well-disposed Catholics would find honest and credible. Even so, the work of the committee makes it clear that we are still learning, still trying to sort out the issues, still struggling with a formidable array of new anthropological, theological, ecclesiological, philosophical, and social questions.

On the negative side: While the committee's consultations revealed many new and helpful insights, I believe that its members did not enjoy the necessary freedom of inquiry in their search for the truth about women's equality in the church. My own concern about the viability of a pastoral that excluded the ordination issue was deepened with evidence of a continuing struggle within the committee itself. For example, in Draft II's references to ordination it is said that all the bishops affirm and identify with the unbroken tradition; whereas Draft III puts it this way: "We make reference to the Vatican Declaration's reaffirmation of the unbroken tradition." Repeatedly, in all of the drafts, useful insights are put forth with no follow-through because they are not consistent with the "Catholic heritage." This internal dissension culminated in an unprecedented move by two bishops, who disassociated themselves from the third draft by preparing a minority report. They were uncomfortable with the "feminist agenda" and believe women's rights are seen in isolation from children's and husbands' rights. Presumably the perspective of this minority report along with Vatican critiques is what now has been incorporated into the letter and appears in Draft IV.

Perhaps the greatest methodological problem of the process was the failure to set in motion an initiative parallel to the committee's listening process that would have engaged the scholarly community in preparing papers on the central issues of the debate for study by the bishops. In writing the pastorals both on peace and on the economy, the bishops were immensely enriched and their debate focused by the spoken and written contribution of experts in those fields. No such effort was made for the women's pastoral. Neither did the process include sufficient time for debate and discussion among the bishops themselves in public assembly. In nine years, we have had only one significant discussion in plenary session; that was at our June 1992 meeting.

The Roman Intervention

I deeply regret that the U.S. bishops' conference decided in November 1990 not to discuss Draft II because of a Vatican intervention. That critique along with a second one should have been made public. As several bishops have noted, Drafts III and IV bear marks of the strong influence of these Vatican critiques. All of the bishops have a right and a need to receive copies for our own understanding and guidance. I believe we would then directly see the kind of harmful pressure being exerted by Rome on the legitimate process of discernment underway in the Catholic Church in the United States.

I admire and applaud the courage of Bishop Imesch, who refused the Vatican's request to eliminate from Drafts II and III any reference to women in the diaconate. I was very impressed by his honesty and that of Bishop Matthew Clark who shared their convictions and knowledge about the women's issue with participants at the Vatican consultation in Rome in May 1991. I recognize the bishops' duty to be loyal and accountable to the College of Bishops and the Vicar of Christ, and the responsibility of the American bishops to be open to differing points of view from other cultures and countries.

As a result of the many exchanges between Vatican officials and the U.S. bishops' conference over the pastoral drafts, we bishops can draw some conclusions. There is great resistance to formally opening up liturgical ministries like altar servers or acolytes to girls or women, though, in time, there may be a favorable decision on altar girls. There is a strong emphasis on equality between women and men being understood as complementarity, not mutuality. But, the most serious concern raised by Vatican officials was the consultation process used by the Imesch Committee. They asserted that bishops are teachers, not learners; truth cannot emerge through consultation. The full impact of these exchanges with the Vatican can now be seen in Draft IV.

Content

There are four specific issues—anthropology, patriarchy, sexism, and ordination—that I find most unsatisfactory in the text.

Anthropology. Questions of Christian anthropology are fundamental to an understanding of equality of persons in the church and in society. By this I mean a study of the human race encompassing its physical character as it is lived out in a historical and cultural context in the specifically Jewish and Christian traditions. These issues are still under intense discussion among scholars.

These difficulties are fundamental. I say this because what is currently offered as Christian anthropology, even in some cases by people who consider themselves "pro-women," is often not informed by the findings of contemporary archaeology, paleontology, biology, psychology, sociology, and the other human sciences, but by Augustine's interpretation of male/female roles. This understanding of women's inferiority goes back to and in turn is based on the traditional interpretation of Genesis. Is this not an important reason why "official teaching on birth regulation, homosexuality, gender equality, etc., is not received, even by well-disposed, faith-filled Catholics" (Draft III)?

There was a good attempt in Draft III to characterize the mutuality shared by men and women, but there is a failure to follow through consistently with the new insight in recommending changes in the institutional church, which continues to operate out of the old dual-nature model. Men can define their own roles and they also determine women's roles. How can women accept this interpretation when an all-male group (bishops) claims to have all the truth and to be able to determine the roles of women? If men and women have differing perspectives on hu-

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manity and truth, then clearly women's reality or truth must be factored into an emerging consciousness and subsequent structural change.

Patriarchy. Patriarchy is the social myth that has been the root metaphor for church and society for the past 5,000 years. The letter lacks an adequate structural analysis, though such analysis is readily available in contemporary scholarship, to demonstrate how pervasive the ideology and system of patriarchy are in the institutional church and how harmful and destructive this system is. I consider this to be the most serious gap in the entire text.

Our church, mirroring society at large, is built on a system dating back as far as the third millennium B.C. It insists that the male head of the household has absolute control and power over his wife, children, kin, and property. Although the Code of Canon Law eliminates some elements of this system, it keeps others. The patriarchal family continues to serve as model and legitimating structure in our church today.

It seems to me that the pastoral is built around the basic assumption, present in our culture as well, "that males should legitimately act as the controlling cultural fathers, while females should appropriately act as dependent minors" (Catherine Spretnak, *States of Grace*, Harper, 1991). In other words, the bishops set the norms and the rules, and women come seeking ways to enter into the "givens"— givens drawn up and established apart from any input by women.

In his "Meditation on the Dignity of Women" (1988), Pope John Paul II cites this text from Genesis [3:16] when speaking on marriage: "He [man] shall rule over you," and reflects that this is intended to represent patriarchy as a sinful situation, not normative but disruptive. Rule by man over woman, the pope states, is not part of God's plan. In fact, however, dominance pervades our church, a dominance that excludes the presence, insights, and experience of women from the "table" where the formulation of the church's doctrine takes place and the exercise of its power is discerned. It likewise excludes women from presiding at the table where the community of faith is fed. This patriarchy continues to permeate the church and supports a climate that not only robs women of their full personhood, but also encourages men to be domineering, aggressive, and selfish.

In our failure to come to grips with the question of patriarchy, we bishops seem to be buttoning up a coat that has the top button in the wrong button hole. No matter how carefully we button the rest of the coat, it will not fit. We cannot adjust by skipping a button. We can't pretend it fits—no matter how nice the coat.

Sexism. Sexism—"understood as an erroneous conviction that one sex, male or female, is superior to the other in the very order of creation and by the very nature of things"—was called a sin in Draft III. "This error and the sinful attitudes it generates not only radically distorts the order of creation; it also violates the nature of things by disrupting interpersonal relations and affecting adversely the social patterns and modes of communication that influence our day-to-day life in the world." This is significant but there was no treatment of the causes of sexism in our society and church, no discussion as to how sexism permeates the history of the church and its attitude and actions concerning women, no explanation about how sexism and patriarchy support and reinforce one another, no attempt to see how women's present experience of sexism could help shape the fundamental changes needed. The call for conversion in Draft III was presented in terms of personal relationships. It was not extended to conversion of church structures. Draft IV waters down the condemnation of sexism as "sin" and refers to it instead as "a moral and social evil." The statement continues to define sexism in a narrow way whereby women are seen and circumscribed by their sexuality.

Yet, it is imperative that sexism, in all of its institutional manifestations, must be more fully examined and determined efforts made to redress its injustices. Sexism represents a threefold injustice: to women, who are denied their rightful place in the human community; to men, who are stunted in their potential for full growth; and to the community as a whole, whose life is impoverished by the diminishment of both women and men.

Ordination. As soon as we begin to speak about the structures of the church, we come face to face with the issue of ordination, the most painful issue the committee had to address and which is taken up most directly in Draft IV.

The present teaching on ordination, said to rest on an unbroken tradition, is considered to be of divine revelation. The bishops are caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, Popes Paul VI and John Paul II have compelled bishops to support and uphold this normative teaching. On the other hand, many bishops, through their pastoral experience of listening to women, have been persuaded to restudy the ordination issue.

In the U.S. bishops' response (May 1977) to the "Call To Action" Conference (Detroit 1975), we affirmed the conclusions of *Inter insigniores* (The Vatican Declaration on the

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Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood). We also invited theologians to join us in a serious study of various aspects of the teaching. At the conclusion of the NCCB-WOC (Women's Ordination Conference) Dialogue (March 1982), the bishop participants, of whom I was one, urged the Administrative Committee to "review *Inter insigniores* in light of the insights of Christian anthropology, sacramental theology, and the experience of women ministering in the United States." We further stated: "We respect the conclusions of *Inter insigniores*, and we invite theologians to a serious study of the issues it addresses. We believe that such a study would illuminate and develop the church's teaching from Scripture and tradition relative to the ordination of women."

The members of the Administrative Committee were not persuaded, saying we were hearing only from women on the fringe. They urged the Committee on Women, Church, and Society to "widen the dialogue" to include other voices and groups. In all 140 diocesan consultations on Drafts I and II of the pastoral letter, participants expressed serious disagreement with the present teaching of the church on the exclusion of women from ordination to the priesthood. I was recently reminded of this fact when I asked a group of first-graders how many sacraments there were. One little girl promptly responded: "Six for women and seven for men."

As presently constituted, church structures do not allow women access to the fullness of sacramental life. They cannot participate fully because they are excluded from its decision-making mechanisms and bodies by the fact that they are excluded from ordination. Significant numbers of people, women and men of good will and recognized wisdom (as well as many respected theologians and scholars), do not find the official position of excluding women from ordination convincing or persuasive.

In the words of Draft II: "They [women] ask how the church can proclaim that women and men are equal and, at the same time, deny ordination to women on the basis of sex." I ask myself the same question. Draft IV, though directly taking up the question of ordination, introduces questionable theological arguments to support the tradition that excludes women from the ministerial priesthood. It seems to absolutize the image of Christ as bridegroom, while ignoring the Christ who challenged the status quo and who called himself "the way, the truth, and the life." It also gratuitously contends that men are called to priesthood for service rather than power, implying that women are interested in priesthood for the power it represents.

For fifteen years I have experienced and felt the profound pain of women over their exclusion from the sacrament of Holy Orders. I am also well aware of the widespread disagreement among members of the church over this issue. Today, I can say that I am personally in favor of the ordination of women into a renewed priestly ministry. I believe this issue to be as important as the issue Paul raised with Peter; namely, the admission of Gentiles into Christianity. Women's calls, as well as men's, should be tested. Justice demands it. The pastoral needs of the church require it.

The Role of the Bishops

Here, let me call attention to the twofold role of bishops as described by Cardinal Joseph Bernardin in his 1977 presidential address to the NCCB. They are to be "members of the collegial body in union with the Holy Father and to be pastors and members of living diverse local churches, whose special aspirations and perceptions we (as a national body) share and reflect." Today, in my opinion, it is right and just, urgent in fact, that the Catholic Church in the United States bring its insights and wisdom, the shared reflection of the community about the role of women, to the church universal. As a regional church in dialogue with the world within which it is embedded and reflecting the consciousness of its own faith community, the Catholic Church in the United States has a critical role to play in shaping the emerging theological consciousness of the full body. It does not profess to speak for all but it cannot turn its back on the lived experience and wisdom of its own local members.

The question is raised: How does a bishop maintain both loyalties—to Rome and to the local church? My response is: if one is loyal to Christ and to the truth as one honestly sees it, one will ultimately be loyal both to Rome and to the local church. If one listens attentively to the faith and experience of the local church, genuine loyalty to Rome requires that one communicate that faith and experience to Rome. Withholding it because Rome does not appear to wish to hear, is disloyalty to Rome and the Petrine ministry. "To speak the truth in love" is the deepest loyalty to anyone or any institution.

There is so much to treasure in Catholic tradition and social teaching that does and can benefit both our church and our society. It is especially urgent that a dialogue be opened between feminism and Catholic social thought with its patriarchal bias. Perhaps a critical first step is the need to legitimate and reaffirm the right of local bishops to engage in such dialogue without fear of being considered disloyal. Bishops need to be supported in their stand. Only then can modern feminist thought, which, after all, comes in various forms, begin to assist the magisterium in its reflections on the central and underlying issue—patriarchy—that supports the evil of sexism in the church and has a pervasive influence in our culture.

Suggestions

It is time for the bishops to try some new things:

1. Instead of endorsing Draft IV as an authoritative pastoral letter at the bishops' November meeting—an unlikely event, since it would require a two-thirds majority vote—issue a ten-page statement outlining agreed-upon truths, spelling out a few of the substantive proposals from the conclusions of Draft III, and identifying major issues in need of further dialogue and discernment.

2. Advocate that this dialogue be continued at every level of

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church life. Dialogue will help us grow in clarity about the guidance of the Spirit in the face of the serious disagreements which do, in fact, remain among us. We need to keep uppermost in mind that the point of a dialogue is not to persuade or move people from their positions but rather to listen, to learn how others define themselves, and to be open, allowing oneself to be disposed to what others say. To be in dialogue is to expose oneself to the revision of one's previous views.

3. In view of the bishops' evident lack of readiness for a pastoral letter, redirect the process to parish and diocesan levels. Revisit the issue in five years.

4. Encourage the development of support groups for women and men who need to identify workable strategies to contribute to the advancement of issues and to avoid despair.

5. Seize the moment of the November meeting for public dialogue and education. These are very important moments for further development among bishops and for new understanding and dialogue between bishops and women. For unless the bishops can redeem the situation in November, what began as a good-willed, if ill-conceived, effort will end in disappointment and dissatisfaction on all sides. Our credibility is on the line. Women are more angry than ever. Our last state is worse than the first.

6. Power is never given. It has to be claimed. Insist to the Vatican that the ban on altar girls—a symbolic issue—be removed.

7. Press for initiation of dialogue with Rome on liturgical ministries other than ordination for women.

8. Issue a call for an international commission to review the ordination issue. Such a commission should be composed of an equal number of women and men including scholars in Scripture, anthropology, and theology; bishops representing various continents and cultures of the world; and members of the Orthodox and other major Christian communities. This commission would begin an open, scholarly, and thorough investigation of the issue of women's ordination. While the commission's study could uncover new and persuasive arguments that support the church's present teaching on the exclusion of women from the ordained priesthood, I believe it would also discover and support modern scholarly and pastoral developments that call for the opening of ordination for women.

9. Support Bishop Kenneth Untener's call for a restudy of *Humanae vitae*. In its discussion on the regulation of birth, the pastoral letter does not fully grapple with the important issue of the nonreception of the teaching of the magisterium.

10. Because, in light of all that has transpired, I am now convinced that we as bishops have to consider alternatives, I urge that our process continue along another path than issuing a pastoral letter. This other path would consist of a serious reflection, an "open reflection" as it were, on the part of each bishop himself as to what he has learned as a result of this endeavor to bring into the public forum the issues that women (and men) are raising. Let each bishop reflect on his reactions to the four drafts. How did he respond to them? What were his own efforts to draw together diocesan resources and groups of women to help inform himself and give shape to his responses? What steps has he already taken, perhaps, as a result of this pastoral process? On the basis of such reflections, the Women's Committee of the NCCB could then develop a report for the bishops, outlining new insights and questions.

While this type of process would be in the nature of a personal reflection, it would also eventually be shared with the community at large so that all may benefit from the endeavor. It would add an extremely important component to the pastoral process since each bishop holds a unique position in the church structure and plays a key role in bringing about many of the changes women and men are seeking.

The next phase of the pastoral process could involve a distribution of these personal reflections and inviting responses to them. Any following steps would be determined by the state of the question at that time.

After almost a decade of listening to voices of women (and men), including voices from the scholarly community, can we keep insisting that those views have no meaning, express no truth? Can we keep using arguments from tradition to support our resistance to change, denying historical reality, when history teaches us that many Catholic traditions have changed over the centuries? Do we bishops truly believe that our teaching will be accepted by persons of faith and good will if only we work harder to clarify the teaching?

Conclusion

I want to affirm the influence and enrichment brought to my own learning and to my growth as a person and as a bishop by feminist scholars and many deeply committed and gifted women. I also express profound sorrow for my own failures in communication, language, and relationships with women coworkers and friends.

Let us continue our journey with honesty, respect, and faith in the overwhelming significance of what we are undertaking—the building of a sacred bridge on which together we walk to heal ourselves of conflict. After all, if the religious community cannot show the world a spirit of reconciliation, then where else shall we look for hope and vision?

Despite disappointment, anger, and frustration, can we find any light and hope from church history? I believe the answer is yes. In Vatican II's *Declaration on Religious Freedom*, the church evidenced its ability to discern new realities and new truths. In *Nostra aetate*, the council fathers achieved what Cardinal Bea called a "reconsideration of soul." Vatican II, he said, "introduced a real, almost miraculous, conversion in the attitudes of the church toward the Jewish people."

What a new moment it would be for the American bishops to engage our hearts and help renew the church's institutional life in a profound reconsideration of soul in addressing the concerns of women in the church. □

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WILL CALIFORNIA LEGALIZE EUTHANASIA?

ALEXANDER MORGAN CAPRON
VICKI MICHEL

Robert Frost once wrote of meeting a man from California,

a state so blessed,
He said, in climate, none had ever died there
A natural death, and Vigilance Committees
Had to organize to stock the graveyards
And vindicate the state's humanity.

Much has changed since Frost's time, not the least in the way death occurs, but now a new risk to the state's humanity has arisen in the form of an initiative that will appear on the ballot in the November general election. If approved, Proposition 161—entitled "Physician-Assisted Death. Terminal Condition"—would make California the first state to legalize the performance of euthanasia by physicians acting at their patients' requests.

This is not the first time that such a proposal has been placed before American voters. The Hemlock Society, which was organized in the 1980s in Southern California, has been seeking an opportunity to put this question before the public for years and failed to qualify an initiative for the California ballot in 1988. A related organization, Americans Against Human Suffering (AAHS), succeeded in getting its "aid-in-dying" statute on the November 1991 ballot in Washington State. With that state's reputation for tolerance and liberality, it was not surprising that polls repeatedly showed a strong favorable majority. Nonetheless, on November 5, 1991, Washington voters rejected the proposal by a 54-to-46 margin.

Even before that defeat, AAHS had launched a second try in California. Beginning in October 1991, its state affiliate mounted a major campaign, with paid signature-gatherers and volunteers from a broad coalition of supporters, and succeeded in collecting better than 10 percent more than the 385,000 valid signatures required. Thus, California's Proposition 161 takes on special significance. The adoption of this radical change in the law would be momentous to Californians as well as for other patients who could come to the state for a final "magic bullet" to provide a swift end to their final illness. The polls thus far reveal strong support for Proposition 161 (and exceptionally few "undecideds") among Californians. In the barrage of other initiatives on the November ballot the public may have difficulty getting beyond media "sound bites" and giving Proposition 161 the serious attention it deserves. Leaving for others the analysis of the general risks and defects of physician "aid-in-dying," this essay will highlight internal problems and drafting defects in Proposition 161.

The problems with the initiative begin with its "Declaration of Purpose" which creates a context for the substantive provisions that follow. The Declaration affirms the importance of patient self-determination and states that the prolongation of life made possible by medical technology "may cause loss of patient dignity and unnecessary pain and suffering, for both the patient and the family, while providing nothing medically necessary or beneficial." Assertions like this give a good sense of why the initiative appeals to many people. But in also contending that "current state laws do not adequately protect the rights of terminally ill patients," the Declaration of Purpose falsely suggests that no legal mechanisms now exist for patients to avoid such "artificial prolongation" of life.

In fact, California has pioneered in the development of statutory and case law to protect the rights of patients regarding their treatment and death. The California Natural Death Act, enacted in 1976, updated in 1991, provided the impetus for U.S. jurisdictions; it allows adults to sign a "Declaration" at any time that directs their physicians to forgo life-sustaining treatment, including artificial nutrition and hydration, in the event of terminal illness or permanent unconsciousness. California again led the way with its Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care Act (1983), giving trusted "proxies" authority to carry out patients' wishes and protect their interests. By ignoring these statutes

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This essay is part of a special report on California's Proposition 161, published with essays by Carlos F. Gomez, Leon R. Kass, and Daniel Callahan, essays which first appeared in a *Commonweal* Special Supplement (August 8, 1991). That supplement addressed similar euthanasia legislation in Washington State. Ordering information for this revised special report on California will be found on page 19.

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and relevant case law, the "Declaration of Purpose" suggests that Proposition 161 is needed to fill a gap that does not exist.

Apart from this misleading language, two other aspects of Proposition 161 may give pause even to people who are sympathetic toward the idea of legalizing euthanasia: problems with its general framework, and deficiencies in its illusory safeguards.

THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK. Among the central features of Proposition 161, two bear special attention: the prominent role given to the "Directive" that people sign to record their desire for a quick and painless death, and the applicability of the statute to patients whose pain and suffering could be remedied short of being put to death.

Advance Directives. Proposition 161 states that "aid-in-dying"—defined as "a medical procedure that will terminate life...in a painless, humane, and dignified manner," either administered by a physician or provided to a patient for self-administration—will be used when a "qualified patient" determines that the time has arrived and "communicate[s] that determination directly to the attending physician." The heart of being "qualified" is being a mentally competent adult who has been diagnosed by two physicians as suffering from an irreversible condition that will result in death within six months. Among the other requirements to be "qualified," the patient must have executed a "Directive" of a type specified by the statute.

Written "advance directives" have become a familiar part of the process of preparing for death. Consequently, their peculiarity in the context of the aid-in-dying statute could easily escape notice. The proposed statute sets forth the requirements and basic terminology of a legally acceptable Directive. The central features—that the document is effective until revoked, may be voluntarily executed by a mentally competent adult "at any time," and must be witnessed by two persons who meet certain qualifications—closely resemble those of Declarations under the Natural Death Act. In the latter context, an advance Directive makes sense because the purpose of the Natural Death Act is to permit people while competent to prepare statements of their wishes about withholding or withdrawing life-sustaining treatment as guides for decision making after the declarant becomes unable to participate.

In contrast, physician-assisted death is supposed to be administered only upon the contemporaneous request of a competent patient. If a "Directive" under the aid-in-dying statute were merely a written acknowledgment signed at the time of the request to provide documentation for the medical record, it would fit into the statute's purported framework of voluntary, competent choice. But by borrowing the idea of an advance directive from existing law, the authors of Proposition 161 have altered the framework in ways that undermine voluntariness.

First, the only purpose in providing that a Directive can be signed "at any time" is to permit—indeed, to encourage—people while still healthy to express their desire, in language supplied by the statute, "that my life shall be ended with the aid of a physician in a painless, humane, and dignified manner when I have a terminal condition or illness." Although a Directive is supposed to be revocable, its very existence may make some patients feel obligated to follow through. Besides such subtle and perhaps unrecognized effects on the declarant's thinking, the existence of a Directive may also alter the response of those who care for the declarant, by shifting the usual presumption that the declarant would want his or her life protected.

Second, by using the format of an advance directive—that is, something that can be written anytime and that becomes effective when needed in the dying process—the authors of Proposition 161 have set the stage for a simple amendment in the statute at a future date to drop the requirement that the request for aid-in-dying be made at the time of the procedure. Advocates for such a change would certainly argue that it did not open the door to involuntary euthanasia but merely allowed patients who have lost the ability to express their wishes to obtain the "painless, humane, and dignified" death that they had already expressed the desire to have.

It is noteworthy in this regard that the proposed Death with Dignity Act is already framed to make the Directive (not the oral request) the key determinant of aid-in-dying. For example, the annual report that hospitals and health-care providers must submit to the state has to list "the date when the Directive [not the request] was carried out," and the Directive (not the request) is the only written documentation required to be made

California Proposition 161

Official Title and Summary Prepared by the Attorney General

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DEATH. TERMINAL CONDITION. INITIATIVE STATUTE.

Authorizes mentally competent adult to require in writing "aid in dying," as defined, in event terminal condition is diagnosed. Establishes rules for executing, witnessing, revoking request.

If properly requested, authorizes physicians to terminate life in "painless, humane, and dignified manner"; provides immunity from civil or criminal liability for participating health-care professionals, facilities.

Allows physicians, health-care professionals, privately owned hospitals to refuse assistance in dying if religiously, morally, ethically opposed.

Provides requesting, receiving authorized assistance "not suicide."

Prohibits existence or non-existence of directive from affecting insurance policy terms, sale, renewal, cancellation, premiums.

Summary of Legislative Analyst's Estimate of Net State and Local Government Fiscal Impact:

Potential costs and savings to state and local government health programs. Net impact is unknown, but probably not significant.

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part of each patient's record.

Intractable Pain. The single reason laypeople cite most frequently for supporting a statute like Proposition 161 is that it is inhumane to make patients suffer from intractable pain. Proponents of Proposition 161 repeatedly refer to the need to provide patients with death as an escape from pain. Opponents recognize that many physicians fail to use means that are now available to relieve virtually all pain, some of the most effective of which place control of administration into the patient's hands. Once appropriate means are made available, only a tiny fraction of patients will experience pain that cannot be relieved.

Nonetheless, as the Dutch have recognized in the rules framed by their courts and medical society for the tolerated practice of euthanasia in that country, the strongest moral case for "aid-in-dying" rests with this handful of cases with intractable pain. Yet Proposition 161 is not limited to such cases. The initiative rests on a framework allowing euthanasia and assisted suicide for any and all people with a prognosis of six months or less to live, not reserving this drastic remedy for the few cases of untreatable, unbearable suffering.

ILLUSORY SAFEGUARDS. The Initiative's Declaration of Purpose reassures voters that it "provides strong safeguards against abuse," but the actual protections are largely illusory.

Informed Choice. First, a good statute would ensure that a request for euthanasia must be knowingly and freely made. Yet Proposition 161 contains no requirement that when people sign a Directive or request aid-in-dying they be given any particular information about their medical condition and prognosis or about alternative treatments (including those aimed primarily at controlling symptoms and pain). A Directive can be signed essentially in the abstract, at a time when the patient is healthy and has no concrete information about the circumstances under which it would be given effect. Later, when the patient requests physician-assisted death, the only thing about the medical condition mentioned in the statute is that the patient must be certified to be terminally ill. The law does not require that the attending physician explore with the patient at that time the alternatives available to improve the quality of life.

Voluntary Choice. A second basic area for safeguards would be in preventing abuse of patients and ensuring true voluntariness. The authors of Proposition 161 point to the requirement that the Directive must be witnessed by two people not linked financially with the patient and that, in particular, one of these two must be an ombudsman or patient advocate in the case of nursing home residents. This provides scant protection. While witnesses are supposed to aver that the declarant "appears to be of sound mind and under no duress, fraud, or undue influence," the law specifies no methods or standards (or even any affirmative obligations on the witnesses) for substantiating this statement. Most significantly, this protection applies only to the Directive (which may be executed years before the active euthanasia), whereas no witnesses are mandated at the time of the actual request for euthanasia.

The lack of adequate safeguards for voluntariness among vulnerable patients is especially troubling as regards women with serious illnesses. Women typically outlive their spouses, for whom they are likely to have cared through terminal illness and death. (In fact, many women play the role of caregiver repeatedly, nursing their own parents and even their husband's through the dying process.) Once in the position of needing care rather than being able to give it, a woman may be all too open to the idea that everyone would be better off if she were no longer a burden on others and thus all too susceptible to a suggestion of a physician-assisted death. Thus, at least some "voluntary" requests for euthanasia may fall far short of the ideals of self-determination and human dignity proclaimed by the initiative.

As a safeguard against abuse, proponents of Proposition 161 point out that instances of aid-in-dying must be reported to the State Department of Health Services. But these annual reports to the state contain only the patients' age, illnesses, and the dates that Directives were carried out. Since patients' identities may not be revealed, state officials will have no access to the type of information that might trigger concern about abuse and no basis on which to examine the circumstances surrounding any particular case.

Also absent from the statute is any requirement for a psychiatric evaluation or other examination to rule out treatable depression as a cause of the request for euthanasia or assisted suicide. In fact, under Proposition 161, the attending physician is only permitted to obtain a consultation regarding a patient's competence if the patient consents. It is the very patients who will not consent—and the very physician who is unable or unwilling to acknowledge the need for such a consult—who present the most troubling concerns, especially as regards the elderly among whom metabolic and pharmacologic depression are not uncommon. Nor is there any guarantee that others who know the patient well will be able to warn the physician, since the statute contains no requirement that family members be notified of a patient's request. The model Directive does state that the declarant will "endeavor to inform [his or her] family," but it also asserts the choice of aid-in-dying is the patient's alone and places the responsibility to inform the family solely on the declarant, not on a physician who plans to act on a request for euthanasia.

Stable Wishes. A related concern is that any request for aid-in-dying should be stable and not a transient choice based perhaps on the person's immediate reaction to news that his or her illness is terminal. Here, too, the initiative contains insufficient protections. It provides that aid-in-dying requires an "enduring request" by a qualified patient, but it simply defines such a request as one that is "expressed on more than one occasion." Nothing is said about the occasions being separated by hours, much less days, and no waiting period is mandated between the time a terminal illness is diagnosed and the time when the request is expressed more than once.

If Proposition 161 is approved by California voters, people

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who might want active euthanasia could fill out Directives all over the country because the place where Directives are executed is no more limited by the statute than is the time. When they become gravely ill, such persons could fly to an aid-in-dying clinic in California and—during the brief time two physicians need to review the medical records and confirm the "terminal condition"—the patients could twice reiterate the desire expressed in their Directive. That's all the statute requires.

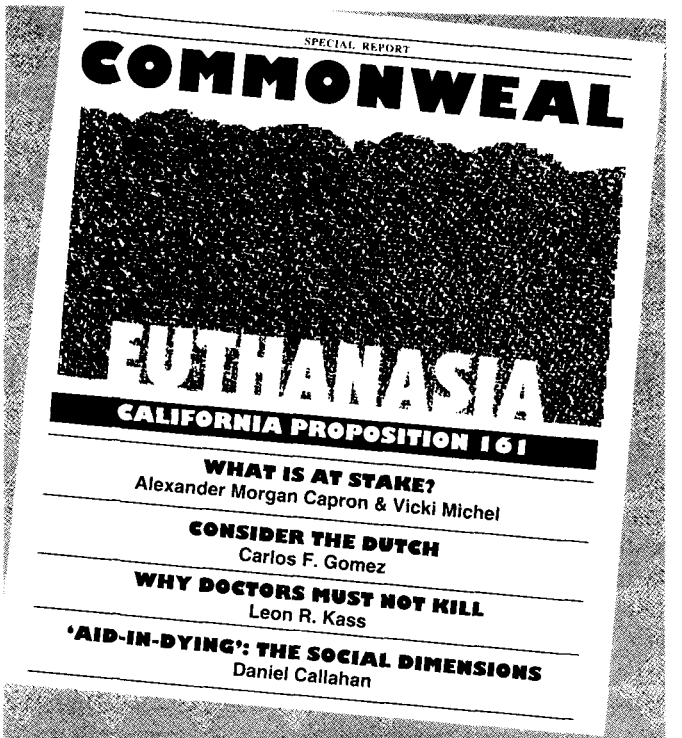
Physician as Guardian. This scenario suggests another weakness in the supposed safeguards provided by Proposition 161: the lack of any assurance that the physicians performing aid-in-dying can or will protect patients against abuses. The statutory term "attending physician" may suggest a close, ongoing relationship, but such connection and personal knowledge is not required by the statute and, indeed, is not characteristic for most people in a mobile society like ours. Thus, "attending" connotes nothing more than the principal physician "selected by, or assigned to, the patient," in the words of the statute.

In a set of "Questions and Answers," the initiative's sponsors cite "the doctor and medical team" as the "principal check" on patients being subjected to pressure to seek aid-in-dying against their will. Yet given the skimpy knowledge that physicians will have of some patients' circumstances and family dynamics, this safeguard may prove weak or nonexistent. The attending physician is only enjoined to "take reasonable steps to determine that the Directive has been signed and witnessed," but "absent knowledge to the contrary" health-care providers "may presume the Directive complies" with the law. Nothing requires inquiries about any pressures toward euthanasia, which may be subtle or unconscious enough that a sick patient would not volunteer them. Moreover, if aid-in-dying becomes the province of a small subset of ideologically committed physicians, little will be left of the alleged safeguards, which depend upon physicians undertaking aid-in-dying as a last resort and bringing great caution and skepticism to each request.

Fallible Prognoses. Closely connected to the role of the physician is another of the central safeguards cited by proponents of Proposition 161: it does not create a regime of death-on-demand for everyone but is restricted to patients who are terminally ill. Yet even the initiative's backers recognize in their "Questions and Answers" that "physicians are fallible." Plainly, the concurrence of a second physician provides some but not a perfect means of remedying this problem: two heads are better than one, but both may be wrong. In ordinary circumstances, many medical errors are self-correcting; in time, the true diagnosis emerges and appropriate treatment is applied. When a patient who receives a dismal (albeit mistaken) diagnosis decides that a lethal injection seems more attractive than the six months of life remaining, the medical error becomes self-fulfilling instead.

In any event, fallibility in diagnosis is probably less of a risk than the mistakes that will occur in predicting that patients will live no longer than six months. Indeed, most physicians regard predictions of death more than a few days or weeks in the future as exercises in the grossest sort of guesswork. There are so many things that can happen to patients— particularly those whose pain and other symptoms are adequately addressed—that would

Life & death in California



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render a six-month prognosis much too short. Thus, no real protection is provided by the requirement that a six-month prognosis be rendered "with reasonable medical judgment."

Expanded Practices. Not only are its present safeguards inadequate, but Proposition 161 can provide no protection against a greatly expanded practice of euthanasia. For example, there will be pressure to expand the statute to minors. In the reproductive context, courts have insisted that pregnant minors have a protected "privacy" or "liberty" right to choose; this right can be limited (requiring parental or judicial approval of the choice to abort, for example) but it cannot be eliminated solely because of the patient's age. So, too, advocates for minors with fatal illnesses will insist that they should be able to choose "aid-in-dying" without being subject to a parental veto. Likewise, the initiative's sponsors insist that it is "limited to those who have exhausted all treatment options" because the statute defines "terminal condition" as one that is incurable or irreversible. Yet under existing California law patients are free to accept or reject any treatment option, even when it might be life-saving. Thus, it can be expected that some patients diagnosed with treatable conditions (for example, cancers) that would be fatal within six months if not treated may insist on a quick death rather than accept treatments that could prolong their lives or even cure their disease.

Misused Language. Finally, a striking thing about Proposition 161 and its proponents' arguments is the way in which words are given meanings other than their common-sense, widely shared meanings. For example, §2525.23 asserts that the Act does not "condone, authorize, or approve mercy killing." Yet it is undeniable that physician aid-in-dying is one species of mercy killing, the species also known as euthanasia, the providing of a good and painless death. The initiative also says aid-in-dying is not suicide although the common meaning of suicide is a person's death caused by the person's own actions with the intent to bring about his or her death. And most striking, the proponents' "Questions and Answers" insist that physician-assisted death is not killing because killing "means ending the life of someone who wants to live and does not want to die." Such Alice-in-Wonderland statements, such attempts to transform physician-assisted death into something it is not, are not trivial. If legalizing physician-assisted death is thought to be good social policy, it should be seen for what it really is, not what magically transformed language makes it seem to be.

Proponents and opponents of Proposition 161 can agree that not all terminally ill patients receive adequate pain control or have access to appropriate care, such as in a hospice program. We as a society often fail at caregiving. But the premise of Proposition 161—that the dignity of a dying person can only be maintained by legalizing physician-assisted death—is wrong. There is a real social problem of the inadequacy of our care of dying patients. We need to provide more education on pain management in medical schools and better funding of hospice care. And patients should not be subjected to unwanted treatment that prolongs their dying. We can make possible for patients the dignified death they desire and still avoid the arrival of a Frostian California. □

SCREEN

MA & PA BERGMAN

'THE BEST INTENTIONS'

To say that the first half of *The Best Intentions* is boring and the second mesmerizing would be to overstate the case, but not grossly. By now, most readers will know that this Ingmar Bergman story is about the courtship and early married life of his parents, a Lutheran minister reared in and embittered by poverty, and an upper-class girl, cosseted by wealth, but serious enough to study for the nursing profession and passionate enough to cleave to a suitor whom her cherished parents deplore. The entire movie benefits from many wonderful strokes of writing, direction (by Bille August), and, particularly, acting (Pernilla August and Samuel Froeller heading a sterling cast); but in the courtship half of the film there is also a feeling of laboriousness. Each dramatic development in it—the parental rejection of Henrik and various maneuvers to smother Anna's love for him, the seminarian's pusillanimity in regard to the disposal of his mistress, Anna's sense of betrayal when she learns of the other woman, the mistress's self-sacrifice, the off-again, on-again engagement and eventual marriage—seems to be arriving on schedule instead of simply unfolding. Nothing rings false yet little cuts deeply. We are lulled by the familiar instead of being startled into a new perception of it.

Bille August was handpicked by Bergman to mount his script and he has done a scrupulous job. In regard to the movie's first half, too scrupulous. Between what James Agee termed the "active" camera, "which takes its moment of the story by the scruff of the neck and 'tells' it," and the "passive" camera, "whose business is transparency, to receive a moment of action and purely record it," August all too unwaveringly opts for the "passive" camera. On the other hand, his evenhanded direction immerses us, without ostentation, in the period (the 1910s), adjusting us to the tempo of that era's slower pace. The handling of actors is masterful and some of the scenes are carried by sheer theatrical skill: Max Von Sydow's ability to exude sad grandeur and thwarted kindness in his interview with his prospective son-in-law; the mother's bottled-up fury expressing itself as ethical punctiliousness; the swift sketching-in of Anna's uncles.

But, time and again, I was struck by how often predictable writing takes the sting out of masterful acting. When we can list the mother's objections seconds, nay, minutes before she does, and can pretty much dope out Henrik's reactions, too, before the talented Froeller gets a chance to perform them, we are put in the position of savoring acting as acting rather than as the conveyance of emotion. Bravura acting is always to be appreciated, particularly in consciously theatrical works like *Children of Paradise*, but *The Best Intentions* is no such

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John Nixon, Jr.

Second Primer

The rules for second childhood are the same
As for the first. Wash everywhere. Be true.
To the extent you can, assist the lame.
Revere your maker. Speak when spoken to.

work. Its aim is to work on our emotions simply, directly, piercingly. But it's hard for that emotional piercing to happen while we are being connoisseurs of great acting.

But when, in the middle of the film, Anna and Henrik are married, *The Best Intentions* takes wing. And grows talons.

Henrik has accepted a post in the far north, ministering to factory workers and their families. The mating dance is over and, together under the same dilapidated roof, the couple begin to really reveal themselves in clashes and rapprochements that are as intense and scathing as anything in Bergman's master, Strindberg, or for that matter, in Bergman's own work. The Strindbergian method operates at full strength: the terrible festering silence of the male while the female shrilly harangues to the point where she starts hearing herself harangue; the dredging up of past offenses thought to be long forgotten even by the one who dredges them up; class resentments finding their focus on one's own marital partner; the incipience of physical violence; the alternation of bitter comedy with vitriolic fury.

The subplots of this second half contribute to the evocation of inner fires even when they seem to be the stuff of social rather than psychological drama. Henrik's conflict with a factory owner at first threatens to be conventional social protest, but Bergman gradually makes it clear that the businessman is no conventional heavy but a man whose torment mirrors Henrik's own. In these confrontations between man of God and man of power, Bergman's writing attains its cruel zenith and the acting is demonically brilliant.

The plight of an abused child whom Henrik shelters seems at first Dickensian in its pathos until the little boy, though acted with bruising individuality, is revealed to be the embodiment of the Barren North for Anna. Pernilla August's facial reactions to the boy's fall from Henrik's favor precisely chart Anna's psychological journey from tolerance through meanspirited rejection through cruel triumph to, finally, self-disgust and repentance.

In this second half, August's direction cuts to the bone as surely as does Bergman's writing. He uses spatial relationships to create tension, comedy, pathos. Henrik and the factory owner confront each other with the length of an entire church between them until Henrik's more fiery temper forces him down the center aisle, a move that is both an attack and a capitulation. A courtier, having advised Henrik and Anna upon the proper etiquette for an interview with the Queen about a royal appointment, performs a sort of dance without music as he stalks between Her Highness and the commoners. Particularly wonderful is the final image of Henrik and Anna, now embarking upon a second phase of their marriage after estrangement: he on a park bench, she on another a few feet away, they're separated by a space which they bridge by gazing into each other's eyes. It's an unforgettable picture of love keeping hopelessness at bay.

The big-screen version of *The Best Intentions* isn't a mere abridgment of the six-hour film that August and Bergman created for Swedish television. It is a separate work with several scenes differently written and shot. Nevertheless, it's safe to say that Bergman wrote (or at least planned) the longer script first, then mined it for the theatrical release. I'm willing to bet that the longer script has something that will make the courtship half of the story more exciting at three hours than its theatrical counterpart is at ninety minutes.

But what could that something be? We won't know until PBS or video format makes the six-hour movie available, but I will hazard that the TV version contains scenes that portray Henrik more vividly in its first half than the theatrical rendition does. If his relationships with his mistress, his teachers and fellow students, and his estranged relatives bring the tormented seminarian into sharp focus early in the film, then the later portrait of the tormented priest will be even more powerful than it already is. For, in this movie with its familiar Bergman theme of the prison house of personality, Henrik, whose sense of God's justice is so much greater than his sense of God's love, is the loneliest prisoner of them all.

Meanwhile, my appetite is whetted. As far as *The Best Intentions* is concerned, less is not more. RICHARD ALLEVA

MEDIA

A PERFECT MATCH

CDs & JAZZ

At this moment, I'm still brooding over my fiftieth birthday, and the resentment has been projected onto any technology to evolve after my personal psychic climacteric. Voice mail is a tool of the devil. The word processor is the devil, and I will have no truck with it. And people who have call-waiting in their homes shall be cast into the outer darkness.

But then—there's always a "but then," am I right?—there's the compact disc.

I got my own CD player only in 1989, much against my will, at my wife's urging. With about two thousand real records that I'd been buying ever since 1954 (the *Gerry Mulligan Tentette*, and I still have it), why should I abandon my old friends for a

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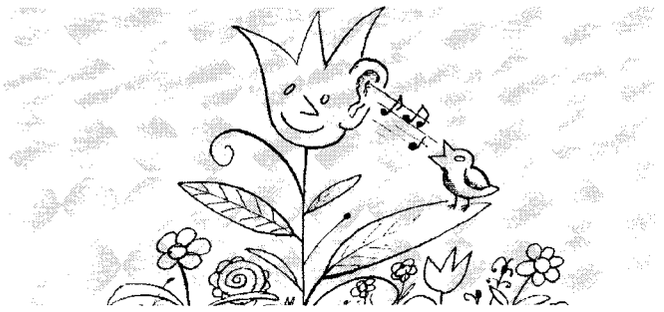

flashy sci-fi gimmick that used, for crying out loud, a *laser*?

But it's a junkie thing: one taste, then one more, and you're sold. First I found, browsing through the local store, a semi-complete collection of Bix Beiderbecke, and I'd never been able to get that on vinyl. Then I found a reissue of *Movin' Out*, the still stunning debut solo album of the godlike Sonny Rollins—he is to tenor saxophone what Joyce is to English—that I'd owned on vinyl twice, and twice loaned, and never gotten back. And then I discovered that the folks who make CDs were reissuing all sorts of great and important jazz recordings that had, in the ancient marketing universe of the LP, simply disappeared from human ken. I don't expect to regain my youth: I've read *Gilgamesh* too carefully. But the CD reissue phenomenon is, by me, close enough to that impossible Eden.

And phenomenon it is. Charles Lourie, one of the two very good guys who run Mosaic Records—of which more in a while—observes that "until the late seventies the record companies felt omnipotent, recession proof." Even if people couldn't afford a show or a dinner out, they could always buy a record—cheap and repeatable leisure at home. However, by the early eighties the record companies were becalmed. Somewhere between 1983 and 1985—in other words, overnight—the CD changed all that. "Jazz and classical buyers are always in the vanguard of sonic developments, " Lourie told me, and the immensely enhanced sound-values of the CD stimulated that connoisseur market almost at once. And when, by '85, pop and rock CDs also started selling, "the LP," as Lourie elegantly puts it, "was dead in the water."

What fascinates me, though, is not "sonic development": for years I got by digging Charlie Parker on a record player just a little more sophisticated than a rusty nail wired to a crystal set. What fascinates me, and I'm going to try to say this without sounding like a French intellectual, is the fact that *any truly significant development in information-technology renders its immediate ancestors archival.* The development of writing *makes* the concept, "oral poetry." Printing *makes* the concept, "manuscript"—and makes possible the concept, "library." Think about the curious phrase, "live performance": were it not for the technology of the recording studio, it would be a redundancy, and a pretty stupid one at that. Until recently, you could only ask, "Have you seen *Citizen Kane*?" Now—and a world of difference turns on the verb—you can ask, "Do you have *Citizen Kane*?"

The CD, likewise, is the preservation and transformation of its immediate forebear, the phonograph record. And as such, it has an especially intimate relationship to jazz—which, I know with increasingly ferocious clarity, is the only original, true, and indispensable art to have been produced by our perishing republic.

The first jazz record, *Barnyard Stomp*, was released in 1917 by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, seven white guys who had learned to play by hanging out with the African-American creators of the art in New Orleans. But it's not just that the technology and the art are virtually coeval. It's as if jazz was meant for the recording process, and vice versa. Look. Von Karajan's interpretation of Beethoven's Fifth is not Bernstein's or Solti's, but they are all, what the hell, Beethoven's Fifth. And at the other end of the spectrum, there is and can be only one real version of *Pet Sounds* by the Beach Boys or *Sergeant Pepper* or *Graceland*. In classical music, the recording studio is at best a minor servant; in rock since the early sixties, at least, it is a tyrant.

But in jazz, it is a perfect match. Sonny Rollins playing, say, "Blue Skies" on two consecutive evenings is in fact two different things. "I'm a speech-like player...like a guy talking," said Sonny brilliantly in a 1980 interview. The music is uniquely American—it's spontaneous, spirit-driven, and without a microphone, irrecoverable. The greatest jazz performances—which I insist are equal to the highest pitch of any art—are, if they are not recorded, stillborn sublimity or, in the wonderful phrase of Whitney Balliett (the ageless jazz critic of *The New Yorker*), "dinosaurs in the morning." Like a guy talking: like the ever-lost conversation of Socrates or Pope or, alas!, Oscar Wilde.

So that the history of this quintessential American art is symbiotic with the history of the record industry. Forget all that romantic guff about the smoke-filled bar late at night and razza razza: the music lives *as recorded*, or to invert McLuhan's famous dictum for once, the message *is* the medium.

Which brings me to Mosaic Records, a mail order house that deals in classic and out-of-print LPs and CDs from the immense library of recorded jazz, and that includes, in each set, rare photos, complete discographies and recording data, and intelligent essays on the music.

Mosaic leases most of its offerings from the original copyright holders, so they are almost all limited editions. And since they set up shop in 1982, just at the beginning of the CD revolution, they managed to lease a lot of simply incredible stuff. To name just a few of their—literally—priceless choices: the complete Black Lion recordings of Thelonius Monk; the complete recordings of the Stan Getz Quintet with Jimmy Raney on guitar; the complete recordings of Art Blakey's greatest Jazz Messengers, with Wayne Shorter and Lee Morgan. Now, ten years later, when all the major companies have discovered the profit in CD reissues of their jazz archives, things are more competitive. But even now, if you love the music beyond measure—and is there another way to love something?—there's nothing around quite like Mosaic. It's helping to preserve and exalt the single visitation of genius, jazz, that may, if worst comes to worst and many of us think it will, stand before some spectral court as justification for there having been an America at all. Long may they swing.

FRANK McCONNELL

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Swinging in the glider on the porch

AMERICAN GIRL
Scenes from a Small Town Childhood
Mary Cantwell
Random House, $20, 209 pp.

Abigail McCarthy

All over America the small towns are disappearing. Their main streets are spotted with boarded-up storefronts; their eating places have been moved to highway strips. In mid-America the declining numbers of family farms have made the towns negligible as trading centers. On the coasts, and along the river valleys, industry and shipping have deserted the small mill and factory towns; railroads, buses, and airlines no longer serve most of them. And everywhere the Wal-Marts and the malls have replaced the downtown where people used to meet at the general stores, the drugstores with ice cream counters, and the movie theater.

Fortunately, small towns, their charms and their limitations, will live on in nostalgic fiction and reminiscence. Mary Cantwell's *American Girl* is an example of the latter. The strong and lasting effect of an old-fashioned childhood is vividly illustrated in the last chapter: "Once, when I was walking west with my then-young daughters, I sniffed that unmistakable low-tide scent that comes off the Hudson and said, 'Doesn't that smell like home!' 'Mother,' my older daughter said, 'this *is* home.'"

But, of course, New York wasn't and isn't home to Mary Cantwell, as everyone brought up in a small town will understand. She loves New York where she has lived far longer than she had lived in her hometown of Bristol, Rhode Island, but, "My country is 200 miles away by Amtrak and all it would take is the sale of an apartment and the packing up of some books and furniture for me to live there again....It would be as if nothing had ever happened, as if nothing had ever changed. Bristol, my Bristol, would blot out everything that came after it."

She evokes Bristol, the Bristol of her youth for us in one haunting description and anecdote after another. There is the sense of place—the ever-present salty smell of the harbor, the world of white Victorian houses and leafy trees, the common that divides comfortable Bristol from the poorer Bristol of the Portuguese and the immigrant Italians who live near the rubber factory where "the air was yellow and stank of rubber."

There is the bustling life of the big two-family house—Granny and Gampy and Aunt Esther downstairs, Mother and Father, Mary and her sister Diana upstairs. "Downstairs food and upstairs food are different. Downstairs tends towards baked beans, clam chowder, codfish cakes, johnny cake and apple pie. Upstairs is usually a roast, a green vegetable, a yellow vegetable, a starch and no dessert. Downstairs and upstairs look different, too."

There is swimming in the harbor just across the street and the seawall from the house. And skiing on the wet snow in winter down the hill on a nearby street—"so cold, so still and the only sound is a long s-l-i-i-sh." There is the lawn bordered with rose bushes and hydrangeas and flower plots planted with phlox, pansies, sweet william, peonies and tulips and, along a back fence, lilacs and hollyhocks.

Place and the sights, sounds, and smell of it, mark small-town childhoods and the impression is lifelong. And the people of a small town extend one's family in a mysterious way. They are never forgotten. So Ruthie, a lifelong best friend who "married one of the Catholic Connerys and never left town." is mingled in Mary Cantwell's memory with those who lie in the cemetery like the Portuguese grocery boy of the wild blue eyes who died of trichinosis, Miss Nerone, the remarkably encouraging high school teacher, and many others.

But there are subthemes to the nostalgic in this memoir and they bring out the wit and compassion that marked the author's "At Home" column in the *New York Times*. One is that of the title *American Girl*—what it was like to be a girl

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growing up in the 1940s and 50s before the sexual revolution had taken hold. These are the girls who learn about maleness from the *Boy Scout Manual*, who surreptitiously search their parents' bedrooms for information about the sex life of the married, whose terror is "The worst thing that could happen to anybody"—pregnancy like that which drove bold, foulmouthed, fierce Margie and her mother from Bristol forever.

There is the first date with first love Norman—a Friday night movie at the Pastime Theater—the chaste evenings in the glider on the porch "with a boy whose shirt smelled of starch and fresh air and whose young, flushed face smelled of his older brother's after-shave." There are the dances at which, like all nice girls, she held back "to leave a little space between my stomach and theirs"—sometimes to no avail and "that was torture." There are the on again, off again diaries recording kisses and comparing them. There is the glamour of cheerleading, the glory of the high school junior prom, and the climax of the graduation ceremony, prelude to life elsewhere.

Another subtheme is the mixture of ethnic and religious backgrounds that divide the town and the chasm between the year-round Bristol residents and the summer people "down the Ferry" on Narragansett Bay. Although Irish-Catholic Mary Cantwell, because of her family's income and relatively comfortable status, lived in what she called "the country of the blue-eyed," she knew, nevertheless, from an early age that Catholics "come out of the second drawer" in a New England town. And she also learned early that, although she was a junior member of the Bristol Yacht Club which "smelled of teak, leather, and salt which in coastal New England is the smell of money," and although "we looked the same, we dressed the same," a magnetic field enclosed the rich "as if it were a fence" impossible to pierce. Nevertheless, she does not envy The Ferry people for it is she, not they, "who was a Bristolian."

In only 209 pages Mary Cantwell has given us all this of the town she loves—a warm and lovely portrait of place and people in a time gone forever, a portrait sketched in graceful, evocative prose. □

REVIEWERS

ABIGAIL McCARTHY *is a long-time columnist for* Commonweal.

JOSEPH A. PAGE, *a professor at the Georgetown University Law Center, is at work on* The Brazilians, *to be published by Random House.*

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IRVING MALIN *is the author or editor of books on Singer, Bellow, New American Gothic, Styron, and Faulkner.*

SHUT OFF FROM GRIEF

DEATH WITHOUT WEEPING
The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil
Nancy Scheper-Hughes
University of California Press, $29, 614 pp.

Joseph A. Page

This is a shocking book that will profoundly unsettle most readers. It is an important book because it plumbs one of the darkest recesses of the human condition. It is a disappointing book because its length and academic bent will keep it from the large audience it deserves.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes's first exposure to Northeast Brazil came during a tour as a Peace Corps volunteer during the late 1960s in a town in the sugar-growing zone. She returned as an anthropologist during the 1980s, to explore the phenomenon of mother love and child death. What she found was sheer horror, the "horror of the routinization of human suffering in so much of impoverished Northeast Brazil and the 'normal' violence of everyday life."

Death without Weeping is an extended description of and meditation upon the harrowing reality that afflicts poor, mostly black or brown women who have the misfortune to be born into a part of Brazil where economic exploitation has for centuries condemned peasants and rural workers to a marginal existence defined by hunger, disease, and ignorance. One of the salient marks of life in the Northeast is the infant-mortality rate. The core of Scheper-Hughes's book explores how women cope with this constant in their lives. What she reveals, in gut-wrenching fashion, is that in order to maintain equilibrium in the face of recurring death, mothers not only refuse to mourn the passing of their sickly babies, but they adopt behavioral patterns that hasten the death of those children who experience teaches are unlikely to survive.

Chronic hunger has long scourged the poor people of Northeast Brazil. As Scheper-Hughes points out, the caloric intake of inmates at the concentration camp in Buchenwald exceeded that of the Northeastern sugar cane cutter today. Hunger has stunted the growth of the rural population ("pygmitization" is a term that has been used to describe this phenomenon). One study found that two-thirds of all children showed signs of stunting, and of these 40 percent were nutritionally dwarfed.

The legacy of hunger that *Death without Weeping* unsparingly scrutinizes is infant mortality and its impact upon the women who must regularly give birth to infants who soon become "little angels," the euphemism for dead children.

Scheper-Hughes describes her initial stunned reaction to mothers who make apparently coldblooded judgments about their offsprings' chances of outlasting the rigors of early life in a slum environment, their refusal to take extra measures to help weak or infirm babies survive ("passive euthanasia" is an expression the author uses), and their capacity to shut themselves off from grief when the inevitable occurs.

Folk wisdom informs a mother's reac-

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tion to her newborn infant. A baby showing resilience and spirit will attract nurture and affection from its mother. A weak, undersized, lethargic infant is thought to have been born wanting to die, or to be like a bird, ready to fly off at any moment. "And so a good part of learning how to mother...includes knowing when to let go of a child who shows that he wants to die."

This is not an irrational response. The hazards a slum child must face—infections from insects and snails, contagion from siblings and neighbors, unwholesome food and water, to cite a few—mean that only the fittest will survive. Mothers know this all too well, and as a means of emotional self-protection, they refrain from forming attachments to their offspring until survival seems a decent bet. A tragic aspect of this scenario is that most babies given up as too sickly are in fact "simply tiny famine victims whose hunger is often complicated by severe diarrhea and dehydration."

The detachment assumed by mothers takes various forms. They will not go to the civil registry office to register the death of their children, for example, nor will they attend their children's funerals. (The funeral procession is formed spontaneously by other children who happen to be in the vicinity. They bury the body without ceremony.)

The Catholic church traditionally encouraged poor Brazilians to think of infant death as a blessing, to be treated almost joyfully, since the baby was a "little angel" whose salvation was assured. Scheper-Hughes explains how the new liberation theology discourages the celebration of the passing of child-angels (and thus reinforces the sense of detachment toward infant death), but offers nothing in its place. Its adherents tell mothers that God wants their babies to live, yet there is no way that poor women can raise all the children they conceive. Since progressive priests and nuns generally accept the teachings of the church about female sexuality and reproduction, they leave poor women in a state of what Scheper-Hughes calls "moral and theological confusion."

Death without Weeping has too many abrupt transitions, its history of social unrest in the Northeast countryside is debatable, and the chapter on carnival could well have been eliminated. The filmmaker of *Black Orpheus* was French, not Brazilian; the military coup of 1964 was in the fall, not the spring; and the Rio de Janeiro samba schools parade in a "Sambadrome," not under a "giant carnival dome."

The subtitle of *Death without Weeping* is somewhat overbroad as well, since the book deals mainly with but one form of everyday violence, and in only one region that is culturally distinct from the rest of Brazil. But Scheper-Hughes digs deeply into the context of the violence, and thereby provides the reader with a historical, social, and economic prism with which to view her anthropological findings and interpretations. She also brings her subjects to life in vivid, if occasionally excessive detail.

Minor flaws aside, this is a searing treatment of how social and economic injustice has created forces that deprive mothers of what would seem to be the most basic of human rights, the right to grieve for their dead babies. □

TRIED & FOUND WANTING

THE CULTURE OF CONTENTMENT
John Kenneth Galbraith
Houghton Mifflin, $22.95, 183 pp.

Christopher Lasch

To call America a "culture of contentment," in the nerve-wracked nineties, seems uncommonly perverse. By all accounts, Americans have never felt less confident about the future. Their uneasiness goes well beyond the faltering economy. The vacuum of public leadership, the trivialization of public discourse, the commercialization of the press, the cynicism and nihilism of popular entertainment, the collapse of public education, the weakening of family ties, the loss of national unity and purpose—all this hardly adds up to a recipe for contentment. How can Galbraith expect anyone to take his diagnosis seriously?

If he intended to argue merely that people who run things seldom have a strong incentive to change them, we could accept this platitude as a plausible though partial and inadequate explanation of our political stalemate. But "contentment"—which in Galbraith's vocabulary boils down to a reluctance to support social democratic reforms—is not confined, as he sees it, to the 20 percent of Americans who take in more than half of all income. It afflicts a majority, at least a majority of those who vote. Even the poor suffer, it seems, from "relative tranquility." They compare themselves "not with those who are more fortunate but with their own past position." The recognition that they are better off than they were in the deep South or the third world has a "tranquilizing effect." From top to bottom, then, American society is riddled with contentment.

Needless to say, this analysis does not rest on observation, even on a casual survey of public opinion polls. It is a deduction from the failure of liberal economic policy to command widespread support. For Galbraith, the value of that policy is self-evident. He does not allow himself to entertain the slightest doubt that "life in the great cities...could be improved, and only will be improved, by public [i.e. government] action—by better schools with better-paid teachers, by strong, well-financed welfare services, by counseling on drug addiction, by employment training, by public investment in...housing" etc., etc. When the "willingness to appropriate and spend public funds" is so obviously the solution (the only solution, Galbraith insists) not just to poverty—the "most serious social problem of the time"—but to every other social problem, then "contentment" becomes the only explanation of inaction.

Is it necessary to point out a more obvious explanation—that Galbraith's remedies have already been tried and found wanting? Teachers' pay has risen steadily without any improvement in teaching.

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Public housing has been notoriously a disaster. The welfare system is another; and we have long since passed the point where criticism of welfare can be dismissed as a way of "blaming the victim." Such pieties belong to a vanished age of political simplicity. If people reject them, it is not because they are "contented" but because they are wiser than they used to be.

There is a kernel of truth in Galbraith's description of American society. To an alarming extent, the privileged few—by an expansive definition, the top 20 percent—have made themselves independent of public services. They send their children to private schools, insure themselves against medical emergencies by enrolling in company-supported plans, and hire private security guards to protect themselves against the mounting violence around them. In effect, these people have seceded from the common life. It is not just that they see no point in paying for public services. Many of them have ceased to think of themselves as Americans in any important sense, implicated in America's destiny for better or worse. Their ties to an international culture of work and leisure—of business, entertainment, information, and "information retrieval"—make them deeply indifferent even to the prospect of American national decline.

These would-be cosmopolites are not exactly contented—they might better be described as sophisticated, self-absorbed, self-satisfied, and self-righteous. Nor are they resistant to change, strictly speaking. They are themselves riding a tremendous wave of change, revolutionary in its implications. But they have little interest in improving the quality of our public life; to that extent, Galbraith is right about the source of our political stagnation.

He is quite wrong, however, in broadening the category of the "contented" to the "majority of those who vote" or to the majority of the population or to everyone except the "socially concerned," or whatever he means to argue—his characterization of the contented class varies from page to page. Most Americans still depend on public services and still care, if for no other reason, about the future of their country. Their hunger for change, moreover, is the one fact that clearly emerges from a presidential campaign that is otherwise confusing and unpredictable. When they speak of change, of course—and this is what Galbraith finds hard to forgive—they do not mean a return to the New Deal.

Not only in the United States but in Western Europe the limits of the welfare state have become painfully evident. It is increasingly clear that we need to reinvigorate forms of public life that are independent of the market and the state alike. The public realm can no longer serve as a synonym for the state. Criticism of the welfare state, far from a sign of contentment, has become a necessary condition of change—though not the kind of change Galbraith has in mind.

"The prospect is not bright," he says in his concluding chapter, titled "Requiem." I would be the last to argue that the prospect is rosy. But the death of the welfare state, the death of social democracy, is not the death of democracy itself. Who knows? It may turn out to be the beginning of a democratic revival. □

SPILLING BLOOD & INK

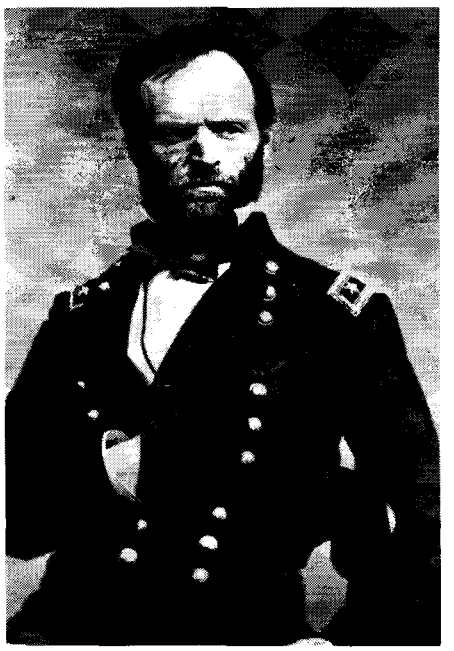
MEMOIRS AND SELECTED LETTERS
Ulysses S. Grant
The Library of America, $35, 1,199 pp.

MEMOIRS OF GENERAL W.T. SHERMAN
William Tecumseh Sherman
The Library of America, $35, 1,136 pp.

Gerald Weales

In 1885, after General Sherman had finished revising his *Memoirs*, first published in 1875, he asked his publisher to hold them until after the dying Grant finished his memoirs. It was a gesture, like his later defense of Grant over Lee as a strategist (*North American Review*, May 1887), that reaffirmed the closeness of the two men. Their friendship may have been a bit strained during Grant's years in the White House, but it is difficult to imagine two dissimilar men (Sherman's austere intellectuality so foreign to Grant's way of thinking) who were so much alike in so many ways. The letters they exchanged in March 1864, when Grant was called to Washington to take command of all the Union armies, are mutual admiration testimonials at their finest. It is appropriate that the memoirs of both men were issued at the same time by The Library of America, the shorter Grant volume fattened by a selection of his letters.

Civil War buffs and military enthusiasts will presumably be drawn to these works to read (or read again, more likely) the accounts of the battles and the campaigns. For me, who occasionally gets lost in the details of combat, the appeal of the volumes lies in their authors and what they have in common. Both men cut their military teeth under Zachary Taylor—Sherman against the Seminoles in Florida, Grant in the Mexican War. This "blunt, honest, and stern character," as Sherman called Taylor, apparently taught them what was expected of a soldier, an officer (lessons neither learned at West Point), and, as Grant's account of the Mexican



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War indicates, taught them how to organize a campaign. Both Grant and Sherman believed that wars could be fought successfully only when there was a single command with subordinates who were in their turn in control of their own operations and an overall plan of action into which all the elements fit. For this reason, although both men were more ambitious than their comments sometimes suggest, they distrusted officers who were dilatory or uncertain or self-aggrandizing; General John A. McClernand, whom both considered an amateur, is an example of the latter with his exclamation at the fall of Fort Hindman (reported by Sherman), "Glorious! Glorious! My star is ever in the ascendant!" It wasn't.

McClernand, a former Illinois congressman, was a political general, a breed that Sherman and Grant distrusted, even when they were efficient and dedicated to the Union cause. Too often, both men felt, the political general had to keep one eye on the war at hand and the other on public opinion to the rear, and civilian politicians were even less reliable. Early in his memoirs, Grant describes an incident in which the howling of two wolves sounded to him like a large and menacing pack. "I have often thought of this incident since when I have heard the noise of a few disappointed politicians who had deserted their associates." Sherman, who early recognized that the war would be long and bloody and who chafed mightily at the North's failure to prepare, was horrified at his first meeting with Lincoln, shortly before hostilities began, when the president responded to Sherman's concern with, "Oh, well! I guess we'll manage to keep house." Sherman left the White House "sadly disappointed" and "d—mning the politicians generally." Later he came to admire Lincoln as one of a kind with him and Grant, a politician who was almost a soldier, but that did not keep him from warning Grant, "For God's sake and for your country's sake, come out of Washington!" Ironically, both men spent an inordinate amount of their postwar life in the city of politicians.

Even less reputable than politicians were the newspapermen—"the dogs of the press," as Sherman called them—"the world's gossips." Grant recalls his youth when "there were no reporters prying into other people's private affairs," and in a note to his doctor the month before he died, he wrote, "I see the *Times* man keeps up the character of his dispatches to the paper. They are quite as untrue as they would be if he described me as getting better day to day." Both men had reason to hate the press since, particularly early in the war, Grant was often attacked as an incompetent drunk, Sherman as insane. The more serious charges against the papers were that they repeated Southern evaluations of Northern military actions, thus undermining support for the cause, and they printed information on troop movements that the South could use. Both generals tried to banish reporters from their territories or to restrict the information that could be sent back.

They differed somewhat on the art of war. Although both men hated the heavy casualties that their troops suffered, Sherman was much more obviously a scientific military man. In his early letters to Julia Dent, who would become his wife, Grant joked about how she might want to hear about his exploits, but as soon as he hit battle, he said, "There is no great sport in having bullets flying about one." He never changed his opinion. Sherman, who would make his celebrated remark about war as hell in 1880, could describe Chattanooga as "a magnificent battle in its conception, in its execution, and in its glorious results," and the capture of two Union gunboats by the cavalry of his enemy General Forrest as "a feat of arms which, I confess, excited my admiration." He was always a professional soldier in a way that Grant was not. Characteristically, he has a chapter at the end of his memoirs, "Military Lessons of the War," in which he speaks in detail about how armies should be organized, moved, supplied. Grant, on the other hand, wrote that "this war was a fearful lesson, and should teach us the necessity of avoiding wars in the future."

Although neither Grant nor Sherman is a literary stylist in the great tradition, both are appealing writers when they are not smothered by the statistics (the body count) and the avalanche of names necessary to

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Lawrence S. Cunningham, editor and author of the introduction, is professor of theology and chairman of the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame.

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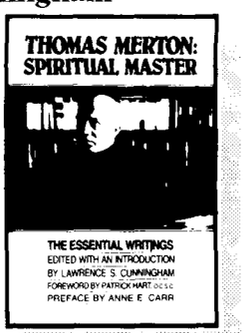

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an account of the war. Grant is a humorist of sorts as when he describes the "moral courage" of those who proclaimed that disabilities kept them from fighting in the Mexican War, "but they did not always give their disease the right name." Sherman had an eye and an ear for anecdotes that give human texture to what might have been a leaden military report.

There are things not to admire in both men: the casual anti-Semitism in their distress over the cotton traders; Sherman's belief in the inferiority of the blacks; his pride in having contributed to "the subjugation and civilization of the Indians." These are not unimportant matters, but it would be a mistake to dwell on them at the expense of so much that is intelligent and honorable and compassionate in both memoirs.

Toward the end of the war Sherman went to City Point to meet Grant and both of them visited Lincoln on a steamer, lying at the wharf. When Mrs. Grant learned that they had not even asked about Mrs. Lincoln, who was also on board, she said, "Well, you are a pretty pair!" And so they are. □

IT DIDN'T WORK THEN, EITHER

THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY
A Re-examination
Jaroslav Pelikan
Yale University Press, $30, 238 pp.

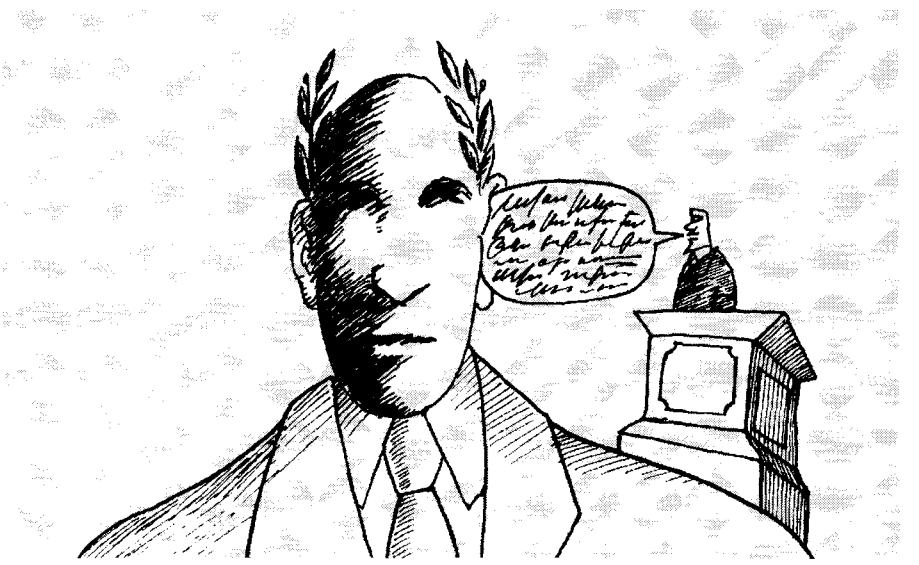
Dennis O'Brien

Jaroslav Pelikan is one of our great scholars and he has written a positively *scholastic* book on the idea of the university. In the high period of medieval scholasticism, commentary was an accomplished art. All the great scholastic philosophers cut their theological teeth writing a *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*. (Peter Lombard had collected in an organized schema the varying traditions of theological opinion; succeeding scholars tried to sort out and rationalize the array.) One could well label Pelikan's effort *A Commentary on the Sentences of John Henry Newman.*

Pelikan's commentary is, of course, not on the whole corpus of Newman's writings but on the series of writings collected under the title *The Idea of the University* published in 1873. The majority of the eighteen chapters of Pelikan's treatment begin with a quotation from Newman which then becomes the theme for discussing the relevance of the idea for contemporary twentieth-century university concerns. Not only is the idea of commentary on a classic text scholastic in inspiration, the very method would have delighted Thomas Aquinas. Pelikan follows an informal *sic et non* dialectic in which various positions on vexatious issues like teaching versus research, or pure scholarship versus social service are carefully arrayed in a yes/no fashion. Having set forth the protagonists, Pelikan scours the historical tradition on the subject as only a great scholar can, and then ends with a version of "I-answer-that" in which he states his own opinion, often revising and expanding on Newman. (Pelikan gently edges Newman's idea of a university in the direction of the modern research institution which the cardinal rather resolutely rejected in his original discourses.)

Commenting on Newman is a worthy endeavor. No single work has probably influenced university rhetoric more. Newman's book is the mainstay of university presidents searching for elegant quotations in support of the pursuit of knowledge and the liberal arts. The problem with *Idea* is whether it has ever moved beyond the presidential address. It certainly did not in its original offering.

The Irish author, Louis McRedmond, offers a very different commentary on Newman which might serve as a counterweight to Pelikan's essay. In *Thrown among Strangers—John Henry Newman in Ireland* (Veritas), McRedmond recounts in lively and fascinating detail the utter failure of the project for which *Idea* was to be the blueprint. Newman had been called to Ireland in 1851 to be the rector of a new Catholic University of Ireland, and his discourses outlined to his Dublin audience his vision of such an institution. McRedmond concludes "Broadly speaking...Newman's *Idea* has attracted no comprehensive endorsement." Broadly speaking, McRedmond would appear to be correct. On the specifics of Catholic universities, most have operated under clerical control which Newman dreaded. Contemporary secular universities (and colleges) in general have been deeply colored by the German research model which was emerging at the time Newman wrote. Newman did not read German, had little interest in or knowledge of that development, and the image of the university which hov-



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ers in his mind is an earlier Oxford not a contemporary Berlin.

Given the anachronistic or transitional characterization of the university offered in the original *Idea*, Pelikan's update does for the cardinal what Thomas did for the fathers of the church: reconcile traditional doctrine to emerging science (Aristotle/Germanic research). Pelikan accomplishes his task with the balance and care that one would expect from someone who is so thoroughly himself a scholarly creature of the university.

Even with modern commentary, however, there seems to me an essential flaw in both the original and the update. Both works are so fixated on the *idea* of the university, that I believe they miss the problem of the *institution* of the university. (I write as a university president!) I am not certain that Newman or Pelikan can differentiate between the idea of an intellectual community and the idea of a university. There have been intellectual communities, I suppose, since Socrates' circle of friends and disciples. Monasteries, cathedral schools, ashrams, the Hoover Institute are plausible intellectual communities that do not emerge as universities. Certain special conditions of twelfth-century Europe led to the rise of the peculiar institutional entity we have inherited as universities. We are uncertain what the conditions were that precipitated this organization for the intellect. Some combination of medieval corporatism, papal patronage, the rise of the cities and so on presumably created the *institution* of the university. Newman's *Idea* failed of institutional reality because the historical conditions in Ireland in the 1850s were wholly out of keeping with his transcendent vision of intellectual community.

Pelikan's treatment for all its wisdom has trouble with the institution of the university. Thus, in his treatment of libraries he is favorably inclined toward Carlyle's epigram: "The true university...is a Collection of Books." Pelikan says that the notion is an "oversimplification" but in the right direction. I would be inclined to say that Carlyle is straight out confused. A university is not at all like a library (or a laboratory), however much it may use the same.

If universities are in trouble today—they are!—I suspect it is not the ideology that needs fixing, it is the institutional assumptions ranging from financial structure to tenure contracts to pedagogy that need to be assayed. As an instance of intellectual community, the university of the day should attend to the grand ideology of the *Idea*'s here discussed, but our real crises may well be in the financial aid budget and indirect cost recovery. □

A SENSE OF INCARNATION

ALL THE PRETTY HORSES
Cormac McCarthy
Alfred A. Knopf, $21, 302 pp.

Irving Malin

Cormac McCarthy is one of our best—if least known—writers. In this, his fourth novel, he uses the archetypal journey to discuss important spiritual themes. He is primarily interested in the origins of evil; the search for redemption; the meaning of our brutal existence.

Although his latest novel deals with the relatively simple characters of three adolescents—Cole, Rawlins, Blevins—who light out for the unknown territory of Mexico to find their mixed fortunes—the year is 1949—he is less interested in their characterizations than in their spiritual recognitions. The plot involves various adventures, misfortunes, coincidences. It is, for the most part, merely an excuse to look for epistemological answers. On one level the novel resembles the traditional initiation we find in *Huckleberry Finn* or, for that matter, in Faulkner's *The Reivers*. (The novel seems particularly "American" because of its underlying structure; it is our kind of *adolescent picaresque*.) But on a second (and deeper) level it is an occult narrative of the ultimate meanings—if there are any—of these adventures. There are echoes of a religious quest, a trip to discover the Holy Grail.

McCarthy's imagery is, perhaps, more important than his characterization. (It is, of course, difficult to separate the two.) The imagery is one of hovering presences, secret omens, perverse signs. I quote at random: "it was like looking through something and seeing its heart." Another passage on the nature of earth-bound horses: "Lastly he said that he had seen the soul of horses and it was a terrible thing to see. He said that it could be seen under certain circumstances attending the death of a horse because the horse shares a common soul and its separate life only forms it out of all horses and makes it mortal. He said that if a person understood the soul of a horse then he would understand all horses that ever were." Cole leaves Mexico; his exit is described in poetic terms. "After a while he pulled his hat down over his eyes and stood and placed his hands outstretched on the roof of the cab and rode in that manner. As if he were some personage bearing news for the countryside. As if he were some newfound evangelical being conveyed down out of the mountains...." These examples are visionary, mystical, ghostly. They suggest that there is another world which somehow influences ours. They, indeed, offer a sense of *incarnation*.

McCarthy's language ranges from the laconic conversations of the three adolescents—even these conversations seem to hold ambiguous "presences"—to the almost biblical cadences of the following passage. "He thought that in the beauty of the world were hid a secret. He thought the world's pain and its beauty moved in a relationship of diverging equity and that in this headlong deficit the blood of multitudes might ultimately be exacted for the vision of a single flower."

I assume that this brilliant novel will force readers to view McCarthy as an original stylist, as one of the best contemporary writers. It will, indeed, assume its place as an example of the great religious novels written by any American. It will, without doubt, disturb us by its violent juxtapositions of beauty and blood, "prettiness" and terror. □

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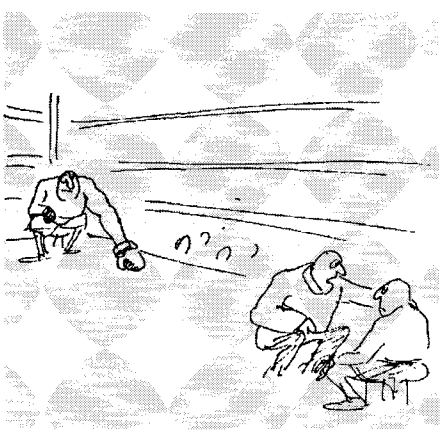
CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

ture their literary sensibilities." Many lack credentials for passing judgment on books; the reviewer is often "a copy editor for the paper, or a reporter or a 'freelance journalist' or a 'novelist' (of whose books you've never heard)." In consequence, book review sections "will remain an institution of charity for unread writers who have a chance to see their names in print." In contrast, film reviewers such as Roger Ebert and Gene Siskel wield "enormous influence," partly because they are "recognized authorities," partly because "they like films and they like people," and "do not look down long, snobbish noses at popular films or at the people who make them popular."

In our own view the number of copies a book sells says nothing definitive about its quality; Danielle Steele, Judith Krantz, and the Spiderman comics are best sellers, but so were Dickens, Tolstoy, and Twain in their day (and still now). But the citations above demonstrate, we believe: that Greeley sees the size of his audience as at least one index of the worth of his books; that he has defended this criterion not only spiritedly but with a certain venom; and, therefore, that the sentence Greeley cites from our article was not a lie.

The other allegations in Greeley's letter are, to use his term, "gratuitious assertions" to which no reply is needed or possible. A.W.R. SIPE & B.C. LAMB



"Stay away from his left."

Hayes too simplistic

Durham, N.C.

To the Editors: Given *Commonweal*'s emphasis on responsibilities as well as rights, I was surprised by the choice of Robert M. Hayes to review [May 22] Martha Burt's *Over the Edge: The Growth of Homelessness in the 1980s*. Obviously the editors know, but readers outside New York City likely do not (I used to live in Brooklyn), that Hayes is one of the leading practitioners of "rights talk" and use of the courts when it comes to the homeless. As he wrote in his review, he believes that the fundamental cause of homelessness is that "people cannot afford housing." Hence his initial effort to solve the homeless problem in New York City—sue the city to provide free housing, on demand. Hayes once was famous for saying that the solution to homelessness was simple and could be stated in three words: "housing, housing, housing."

It is heartening to see that Hayes's analysis has grown a bit more complex: he now grants that mental illness and substance abuse also contribute to homelessness. Hayes has the solution for substance abuse, too; I recall that a couple of years ago he sued the city demanding free drug treatment for all comers. Perhaps lawsuits demanding free job training and free day care on demand are next. The constant refrain of the advocates is that government is at fault for not providing this service, and that service, and yet another service to the homeless population. Very rarely (never on Hayes's part, that I can recall) is there any talk of reciprocal responsibility on the part of those who receive the services. And while, as Hayes asserts, the costs of dealing with homelessness may not be "infinite," they certainly aren't cheap—and having the courts dictate solutions is by no means cost-effective, nor in my opinion is it good public policy. In any event, it would have been interesting to read a review of *Over the Edge* written by a less "rights-oriented" person, one more willing to discuss, yes, the complexity of the homeless problem.

I also feel compelled to comment on Hayes's snide dismissal of New York City's homeless programs. To judge by his review, you'd think the city was doing only small, "demonstration" programs for the homeless. This is an outrageous misrepresentation of the millions of local taxpayer dollars spent on housing and services for the homeless, far more than any other community in the U.S. Hayes knows that New York City has progressed well past the demonstration phase. I know he believes the city's efforts are not nearly enough, but that doesn't give him the right to misstate what has actually occurred.

RUTH ANN WEIDNER

The reviewer replies:

In addressing the suffering of America's homeless poor, ideological approaches to "rights" versus "responsibilities" miss the point. To an advocate, or indeed to a citizen, the point is to secure life-preserving results. If resort to the courts to enforce rights created by state legislatures is necessary, so be it.

It is agreed that provision of survival resources should not be a contested issue in an enlightened society. Regrettably, in Ed Koch's New York of the 1980s, and in the Reagan-Bush era extending into the 1990s, there often is no other route.

ROBERT M. HAYES

Incomplete 'compact'

Cambridge, Mass.

To the Editors: I read the advertisement titled "A New American Compact" [August 14] with great interest. I asked myself, "Would I put my name to a statement like this if asked?" My answer at this point would be a respectful No. I think the statement lacks a prolife perspective on the issues of war and capital punishment. Even though I'm pretty sure that some of the signers are prolife across the political spectrum, a statement like this too easily plays into the restrictions of political ideology, in this instance the vindictiveness of the Republican Right. With Cardinal John O'Connor sitting nearby, President George Bush speaks to the Knights of Columbus on his prolife stance and how he will not waver from that. I agree for the most part that we need to protect the unborn, but if we follow President Bush's lead that is where our respect for life ends.

"A New American Compact" should in-

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clude broader protection for life so that it would be much harder for political leaders to wage war, starve the poor, and kill those in prison. In this area, we are better off paying attention to the witness of the Berrigan brothers, Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

GENE "TITO" ROMAN

Fine tuning

Wickliffe, Ohio

To the Editors: In his hauntingly beautiful poem "The Tuning" [July 17], Peter E. Murphy hints that a kind of exorcism takes place in his household, carried out through the ritual of piano tuning. The shamanistic piano-tuner is Stan the jazzman, and his craft works well against the melancholy that has seized the poet's daughter. Suggestions of black magic and white witchcraft swirl together.

Music's healing power is not the sole subject here. Rather, the crux of the poem is the notion of agency: one person can help restore another's balance. "Call me when it's out of tune," the jazzman offers. Everybody needs a little of the supernatural once in a while.

WILLIAM E. DAUENHAUER

A way out

Cincinnati, Ohio

To the Editors: I read with interest the interview with Anna Quindlen [February 14] and the many subsequent letters supporting the views she expressed about the Catholic church. The rigidity and arrogance of the hierarchy, coupled with its obsession with matters of sex, gender role, and authority, have alienated large segments of the church and undermined its teaching about more substantive issues such as peace and social justice. Disaffected Catholics seem to have either dropped out of the church or adopted an *à la carte* approach to their faith.

I would like to propose a third alternative which has rarely been discussed in this publication: consider joining another Christian community. I have explored mainline Protestant (Episcopalian, Presbyterian) denominations and offer the following observations:

(1) Contrary to the fear instilled in me as a child in the days of the Baltimore Catechism, I have not been smitten by archangels for my activities. (2) I have been much more impressed by the similarities than by the differences between the Catholic and Protestant liturgies, with these exceptions: the music in the Protestant services is richer and more sophisticated, and the sermons are more scholarly and thought-provoking; they deal with important issues in our everyday lives and also remind us of our societal obligations. (3) There is a much greater sense of equality and partnership among clergy and laity, along with an acceptance of people's views and experiences. We are all church ministers, seeking to find God's plan for us in our lives.

Although this alternative is obviously not for everyone, it may be helpful for people who are turned off by the institutionalized Catholic church.

PETER D. WALZER, M.D.

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